

The

Historic Mohawk



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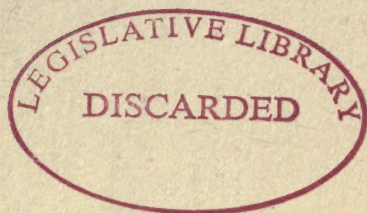
Mary Riggs Diefendorf

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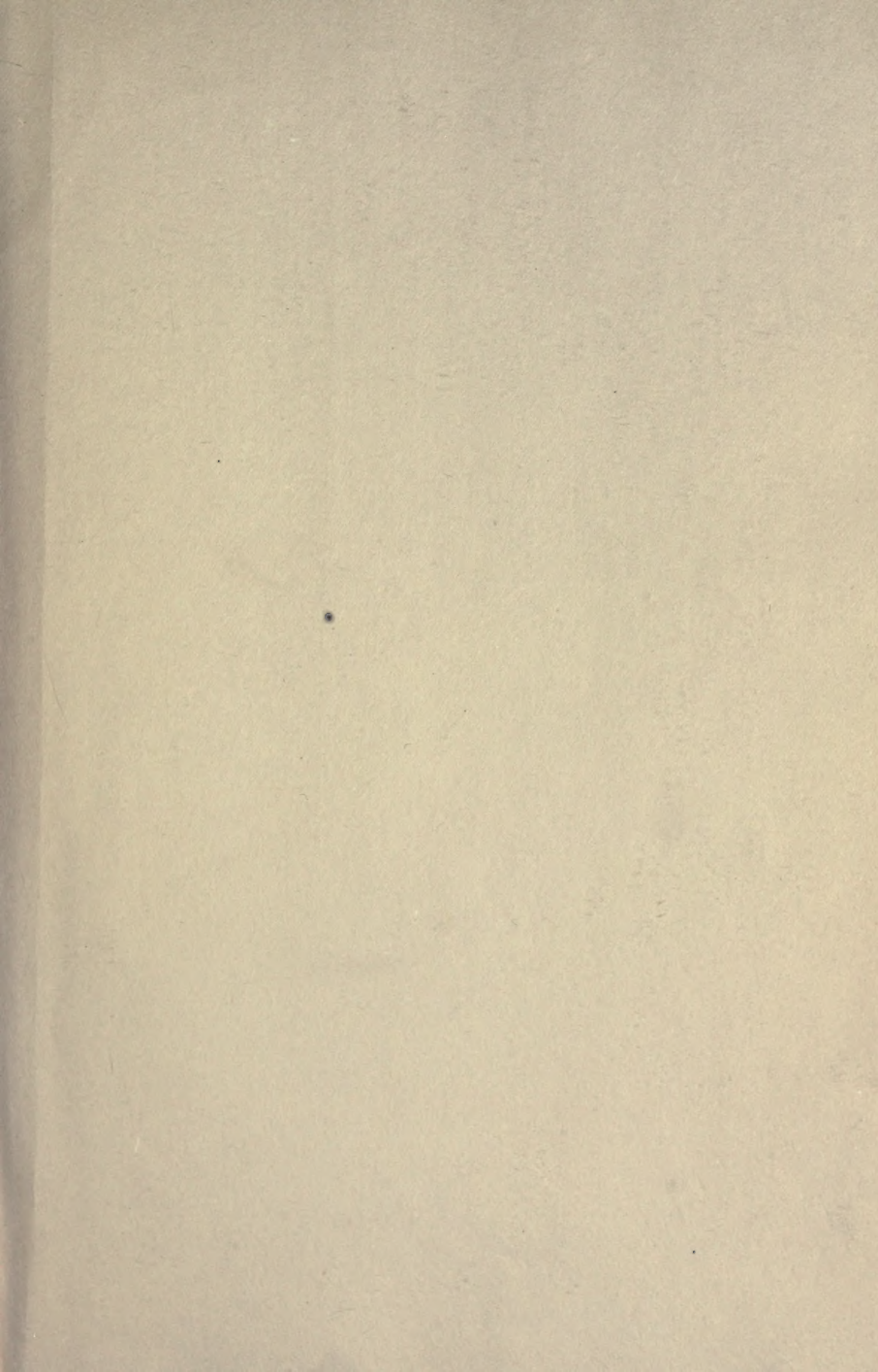


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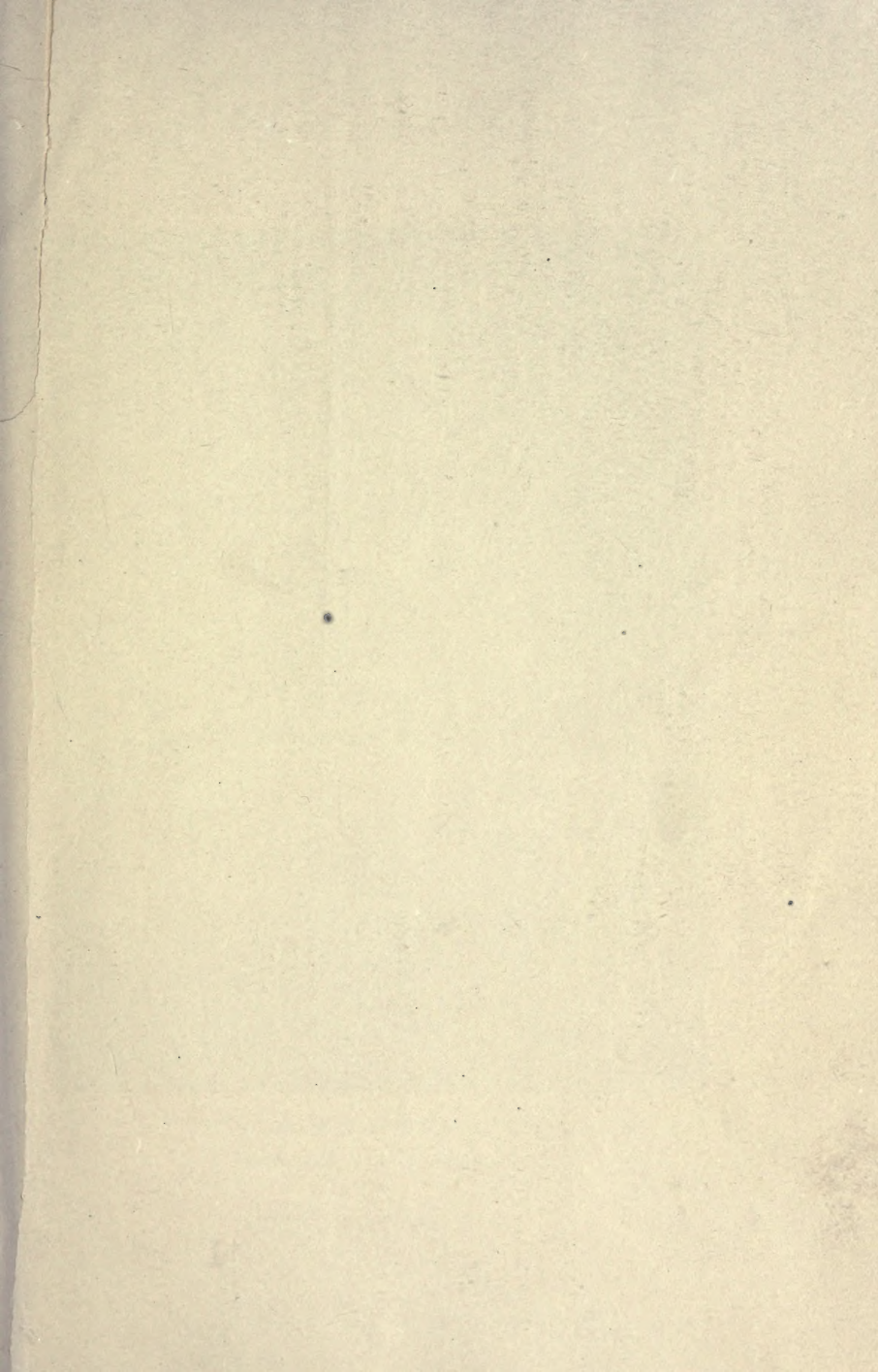
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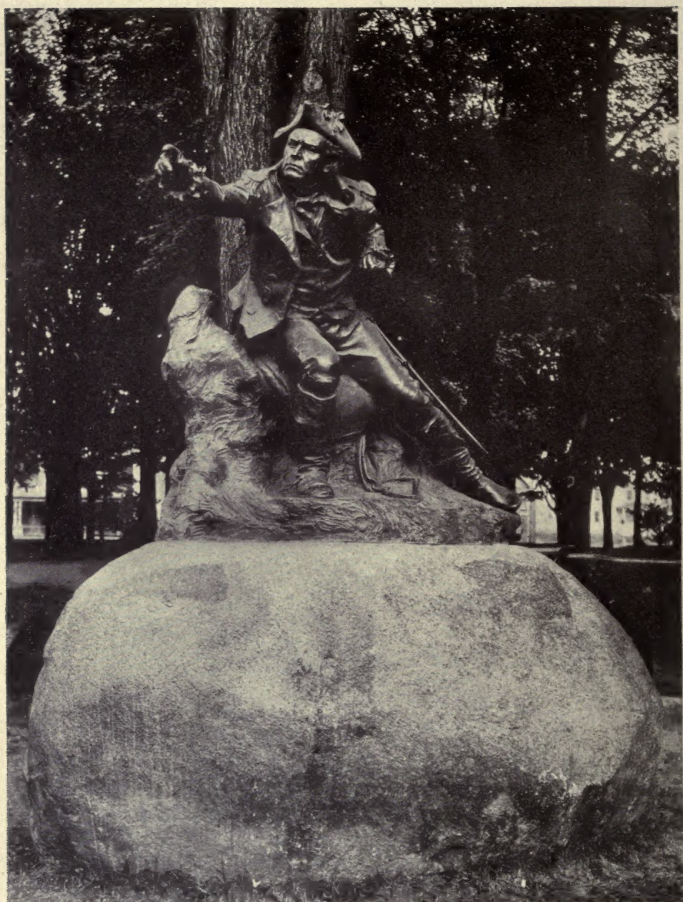












Statue of General Herkimer  
Photograph by A. P. Zintsmaster



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The  
Historic Mohawk

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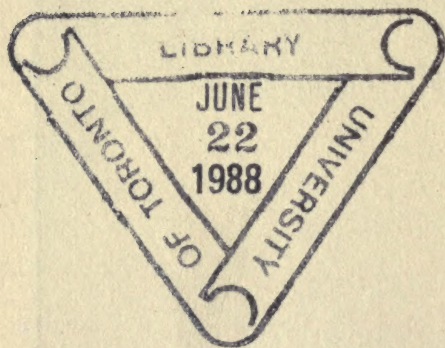
By  
Mary Riggs Diefendorf

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York



**Dedicated**  
**TO THE MEMORY OF OUR**  
**FOREFATHERS**





## PREFACE

THE aim of this little work is to treat the life story of our native Valley in a series of general essays depicting the peoples, the settlements, the customs, and the struggles of its early days. As little reference as possible is made to individual biography. The names of our ancestors have not been relegated to the obscurity of ancient family Bibles; nor their deeds left to be cherished by tradition alone. Our local histories have preserved them and accorded them place in settlement and in conflict, in church and in state. These same excellent works have likewise preserved the life details of our citizens down to the present day. Upon these grounds we would not encroach. *The Historic Mohawk* will not deal with statistics. It would depict the "storied past" with the broad strokes of the painter rather than the finer delineation of the etcher. With the dawn of the nineteenth century the story ends.

The writer cannot but feel a sympathetic interest in the peoples from whom, in every line, she draws descent, the Hollander and the Palatine of early days and the New Englander who found

a home in the Valley at the close of the Revolutionary War. She would especially acknowledge the courtesy of the State Librarian, the State Comptroller, the Oneida Historical Society, and of individual friends for the use of a number of hitherto unpublished manuscripts which are incorporated in the text.

M. R. D.

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Publications of the Herkimer County Historical Society.

# **The Historic Mohawk**





# THE HISTORIC MOHAWK

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## CHAPTER I

### THE IROQUOIS

"Ye say that all have passed away,  
The noble race and brave,  
That their light canoes have vanished  
From off the crested wave;  
That 'mid the forests where they roamed  
There rings no hunter's shout,  
But their name is on your waters,  
Ye may not wash it out."

LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

THE copper-colored natives who peopled the Mohawk Valley when first our forefathers cast their longing eyes upon their future home were but a portion of the horde which overspread the continent. There are those who tell us that the "Indian" race was old when the Egyptian race was young. Philologists affirm that the aboriginal language carries in its structure the sign-manual of antiquity. We know that, centuries before Columbus, the Norsemen visited the land

now called America, and that a Welsh colony still leaves its imprint upon our central plains; while there is at least possibility of the existence on the continent of a Phœnician colony. It is known that in days gone by Chinese explorers visited our shores and Chinese junks were washed upon our western strand.

The proximity of our northwestern borders to Asia; the similarity in flora and fauna in corresponding portions of the two continents; the studies of antiquarians with regard to the numerous Pacific islands, which might have served as stepping-stones from shore to shore; the solid ice once covering the northern hemisphere, which also might have afforded means of passage past mighty convulsions of nature, and the possibility of an intervening continent submerged; the story of the fabled Atlantis; the name of Adam (the red man); repeated discoveries verifying the extreme antiquity of the western hemisphere; the traces of migrations of certain American races and the wonderful ruins they have left in their path; their but slightly deciphered hieroglyphics, traditions of the Deluge and Creation cherished by various tribes; the legends of spontaneous origin from the soil, cherished by some,—by others of long journeys across “great waters,”—fill our minds with thirst for deeper knowledge of the fairy tales of science.

There are those who find in the forest denizens the children of the long-lost tribes of Israel. We cannot but feel a thrill of romantic interest at the

proofs adduced. Such are the breastplate and mitre of the Indian high-priest—the former of white conch shells, the latter of snowy swan's feathers; the medicine bags corresponding to the phylacteries of the sons of Israel; the red man's Feast of First Fruits, celebrated with song and dance.

The tradition of the Phœnician colony in America, the annual rekindling of the sacred fires practised by some tribes, and, *in particular*, certain points of physical resemblance have given color to the Egyptian theory of derivation.

The historian Bancroft rejecting with emphasis the Israelitish claim, above all, enrolls himself among the believers in the red man's kinship to the Mongolian family. The sign-manual of origin, he avers, he bears in racial characteristics and, above all, in his language, which is agglutinative in type structure. Nations may migrate—so says Mr. Bancroft—but they do not deviate from that type of their native tongue which groups them forever in their own family amid the numberless races of earth.

When wise men disagree, it is not for him who has scarcely skimmed the surface of the study of archæology to decide. We can only conclude that whether the aboriginal race has received and assimilated to itself remnants of migrating nations, or whether many tribes have met and merged, approximating through climatic conditions to a certain type, there was something of admixture

in our native population. The past of this continent contains a wonderful record of truthful romance sealed between its musty covers. May future historians yet be privileged to discover and interpret many undimmed and illuminated pages!

Whatever traditions of origin may be cherished by various tribes of North and South American aborigines, the Iroquois warrior goes straight and unblushingly to the point.

The Good Spirit, he says, made Indians of red clay and named them Ea-gwe-howe, "real people." He afterward made white men out of sea-foam.

From the north this group of wild men claims origin. Indeed, Montreal and its vicinity bear every proof of having been that early home to which, at the close of the Revolution, they returned. The Iroquois Confederacy it was that in the days of our forefathers bore rule in Central New York, throughout the Valley of the Mohawk and beyond, even to the shores of Lake Erie. Let us go back to their own account of the creation and their early history.

From an upper realm of men and women there descended into an under world of animals a woman who then rested upon the back of a turtle prepared to receive her. She there died, having given birth to two sons, one of whom became a good spirit and one an evil one. The turtle meanwhile had expanded to the dimensions of The Great Island. The good spirit created good things



and good people; the evil spirit created evil things and evil people and subverted the work of his good brother. At last the good spirit became triumphant and slew the evil one.

About 2500 years before Columbus there appeared a "big elk," an enemy to the peoples, who fled from him in terror. We may well conjecture as to whether the phrase refers to the Great Mastodon whose pre-historic bones have here and there been found, or to some mighty chieftain. In the same era the northern nations met at a council fire upon the banks of the St. Lawrence. They appointed a prince to visit the Great Emperor of the Golden City. That mighty emperor extended his boundaries and built forts almost to Lake Erie. There he was defeated and his towns and forts destroyed. Then appeared a great serpent with horns. A blazing star fell into a St. Lawrence fort, destroying many people. Sorrow followed in the wake of these evil omens. The northern people fell into war and destroyed one another and the wild animals roamed at will.

Near the Oswego Falls there was by some means concealed and preserved underground a body of people. These the Holder of the Heavens released and took under his protection and led them toward the rising sun. Reaching the banks of the Hudson he turned and again led them toward the north and west. From the eastern waters of the Mohawk even to the shores of Lake Erie did he locate at intervals the Five Nations in order—the

Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas. With the remainder he approached the river On-aw-we-yo-ka (Mississippi). On a grapevine a part of the people crossed, but the grapevine broke, the people were parted, and those who crossed became the enemies of those who remained.

The sixth nation he now guided southward to the mouth of the Neuse River—the Kau-ta-noh—Tuscaroras—a race always acknowledged as kinsmen by the Five Nations; and afterward, when conquered by their enemies, finding homes among the Oneidas, thus causing the appellation of “the Iroquois,” the Five Nations, to be changed to that of the Six Nations.

After locating the Tuscaroras, the Holder of the Heavens returned to their brethren of the north and instituted a Confederacy. He instructed his people in their peculiar institutions of government, morals, religion, rituals of worship, in ties of family and kinship. He gave them corn, beans, squashes, potatoes, tobacco, with directions for their cultivation. He gave them dogs for hunting game.

According to another legend, Manitta admired the beautiful country and concluded to create red men and put them in possession. He sowed five handfuls of red seed in the land of Onondaga. Little worms came out and grew into boys and girls. After nine seasons he addressed them and gave them names. He also assigned them foods

according to their qualities, giving corn to the Mohawks, who were bold, and nuts and fruits to the Oneidas, who were patient. The beasts and fishes and fowls belonged to all in common. They were then urged to love one another and take care of one another. They were told that when their present bodies were worn out, new ones would be produced, and were exhorted to defend their common country; and then, wrapped in bright clouds, Manitta was borne toward the sun.

At length enemies appeared to destroy the peace of the Confederacy. Flying heads with flaming beards were finally frightened away by the sight of a woman eating acorns fresh from the fire, they supposing them to be live coals. Poisonous serpents were slain by thunderbolts. Stonish Giants, their bodies covered with scales, were enticed into a hollow by the Holder of the Heavens and there destroyed by heavy stones being rolled upon them. A great bear was at length vanquished in battle by a cat-like beast. A giant mosquito was pursued and slain by the Holder of the Heavens. From his blood sprang the smaller mosquitoes of the present day.

At length the Five Nations warred among themselves. Fiercest of all was the Onondaga warrior Atotarho, whose body was shielded by hissing serpents and whose dishes and spoons were the skulls of his enemies. Sought in council by Mohawk delegates, he became a Mohawk by adoption and renewed among the five disrupted

nations the broken covenant chain. He is identical with Hiawatha (the very wise man), whose later story is thought to be a modification due to the white man's influence in introducing the story of the Christ.

According to other legends it was the Holder of the Heavens himself, the great Tarenyawagon, who, when he had located his people in their new abodes, taught them to plant and hunt, laid aside his divine nature and dwelt among them and became the beloved Hiawatha of tradition. He married an Onondaga woman and made his home on Crow Lake, once Teonto. An only daughter, tenderly cherished, became his constant companion and friend.

It was learned, on one occasion, that enemies were about to attack the Five Nations. Alarmed, they searched for Hiawatha, who was found plunged into deep gloom over some approaching evil. He yielded, however, to their entreaties and accompanied them with his well-beloved daughter to the council place. Soon after their arrival a strange whirring sound was heard and a huge bird of snowy plumage was seen approaching. The maiden was borne to the earth, crushed by the beak of the bird, which was deeply buried in the ground. The assembled warriors hastened to adorn their helmets with the dazzling plumage. Hiawatha, for several days buried in inconsolable grief, at length aroused himself to exhort the Five Nations that their indissoluble union would be the



only source of protection against their enemies. He then solemnly reorganized the Confederacy, and, in his white canoe, his mission ended, was borne away into the Heavens.

When the French and Dutch palefaces first made their appearance in the present Empire State, the Iroquois Confederacy was at the summit of its power,—a beautifully modelled little republic of five states whose orators and warriors, skilled in statesmanship, have won for themselves the admiring title of the “Romans of the New World.”

“People of the Long House,” these remarkable aborigines styled themselves, likening their strip of country to the longitudinal Indian wigwam with a common roof but several lodges. The Mohawks (Ga-ne-a-ga-o-no), “People Possessors of the Flint”; Oneidas (Onayotekaono), “Granite People”; Onondagas (Onundogaono), “People on the Hills”; Cayugas (Gwe-u-gweh-o-no), “People at the Mucky Land”; and Senecas (Nundawaono), “Great Hill People,” occupied together this stupendous habitation. On watch at the eastern door stood the Mohawk facing the sunrise; at the western door, looking toward the setting sun, was stationed his brother Seneca; while in the central lodge was seated the Onondaga, guarding the council fire.

“People of Many Fires” is one interpretation of the name of Iroquois. Others derive the word from the verb “ierokwa,” to smoke. The French find origin for the word in the verb “hiro,”

which means "I have said." "Konoshioni" (cabin makers) is the appellation adopted by themselves.

They had conquered their ancient enemies, the Hurons; they had wiped out the Neutral and Tobacco nations, whose homes lay in their path. Old maps showing the region between the St. Lawrence and the Mohawk bear the pathetic record "Villages Destroyed." They had penetrated to the Mississippi and the Carolinas; New England had felt their power; Long Island lay under tribute, and the savage races trembled at the name of Konoshioni.

From Albany to Buffalo stretched the Long House of the Iroquois, but the Mohawk Valley, beginning with Rome and ending with Cohoes, afforded a dwelling-place to two families only of the Great Confederacy—the Oneidas and the Mohawks.

Called "Maquaas" by the Dutch, "Agniers" by the French, "Mohawks" by the English, by themselves "Caniengas," *People of the Flint*, the people who gave their name to our lovely river lived in a region bounded on the north by the Lake of Corlaer, on the east by the Falls of Cohoes, on the south by the sources of the Susquehanna, and on the west by the country of the Oneidas. Bravest of all the brave Iroquois, theirs was the right to furnish a war-chief who should lead the Five Nations to arms. It was theirs to collect tribute of shells of wampum from the Long Island

tribes and to carry conquest along the sea-coast, and of them it was said that tribes on both banks of the Hudson shrank before their war-cry. These were the men who lived at peace with their pale-face neighbors of the Mohawk Valley; who, on the hill of Tawasentha, where once lived the mighty Hiawatha, smoked the pipe of peace with the Dutch settlers of Albany and thenceforth kept the covenant chain as bright as silver until, generations later, it was stained with the blood of our forefathers when the Britons placed a price upon American scalps.

From a point on the St. Lawrence southward to the location of Utica ran the boundary line between the Mohawks and the Oneidas, the country claimed by the latter extending to the northern and southern limits of the State, and bounded on the west by a line running through Deep Spring, Onondaga County, including, however, Oneida Lake.

Of all the Five Nations, the Oneida is spoken of by early writers as most polite. He did not lack in bravery, but he excelled in diplomacy. Noble in bearing, urbane in manner, his very language, as he pronounced it—the O-ne-i-ta—was flowing and smooth. It was among this gentle people, in after years, that the Protestant faith first took deepest root and that the covenant chain held firmest during the Revolutionary War.

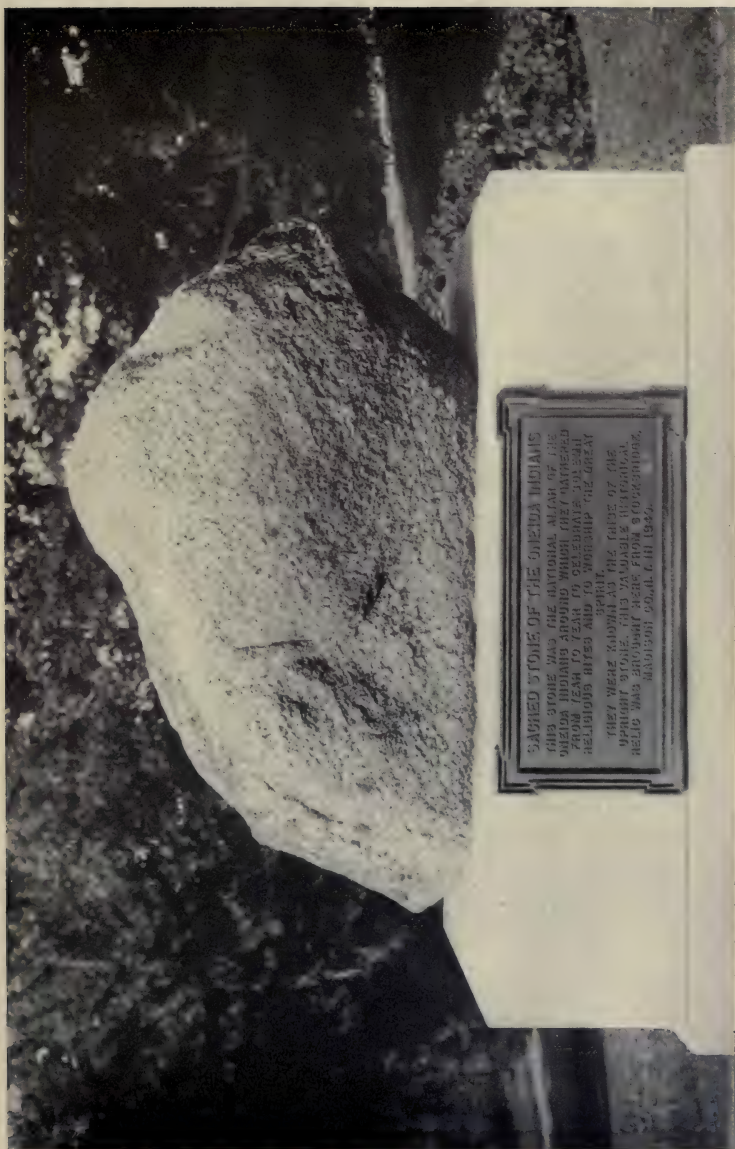
By tradition the first settlement of the Oneidas was upon the head waters of the Susquehanna

(Kaw-nah-taw-te-ruh). The next location was in the town of Stockbridge, Madison County, at Ca-nagh-ta-ragh-ga-ragh. About 1550 they removed to Oneida Castle—Ca-no-na-lo-a (Enemy's Head on a Pole). Here they were settled in 1609 and here they were still in 1677 when the traveller, Greenhalgh, says of them that the "Onyades have but one town, doubly stockaded, of about one hundred houses."

"O-ne-yu-ta-aug"—this is the way the Oneidas pronounced the name of the Oneida Stone, a granite boulder which rested always near them in all their journeyings and which they appeared to adore. The "aug" was pronounced smoothly as a breath and seems to give the whole word a more definite meaning. O-nia-ta-aug signified "People of the Stone."

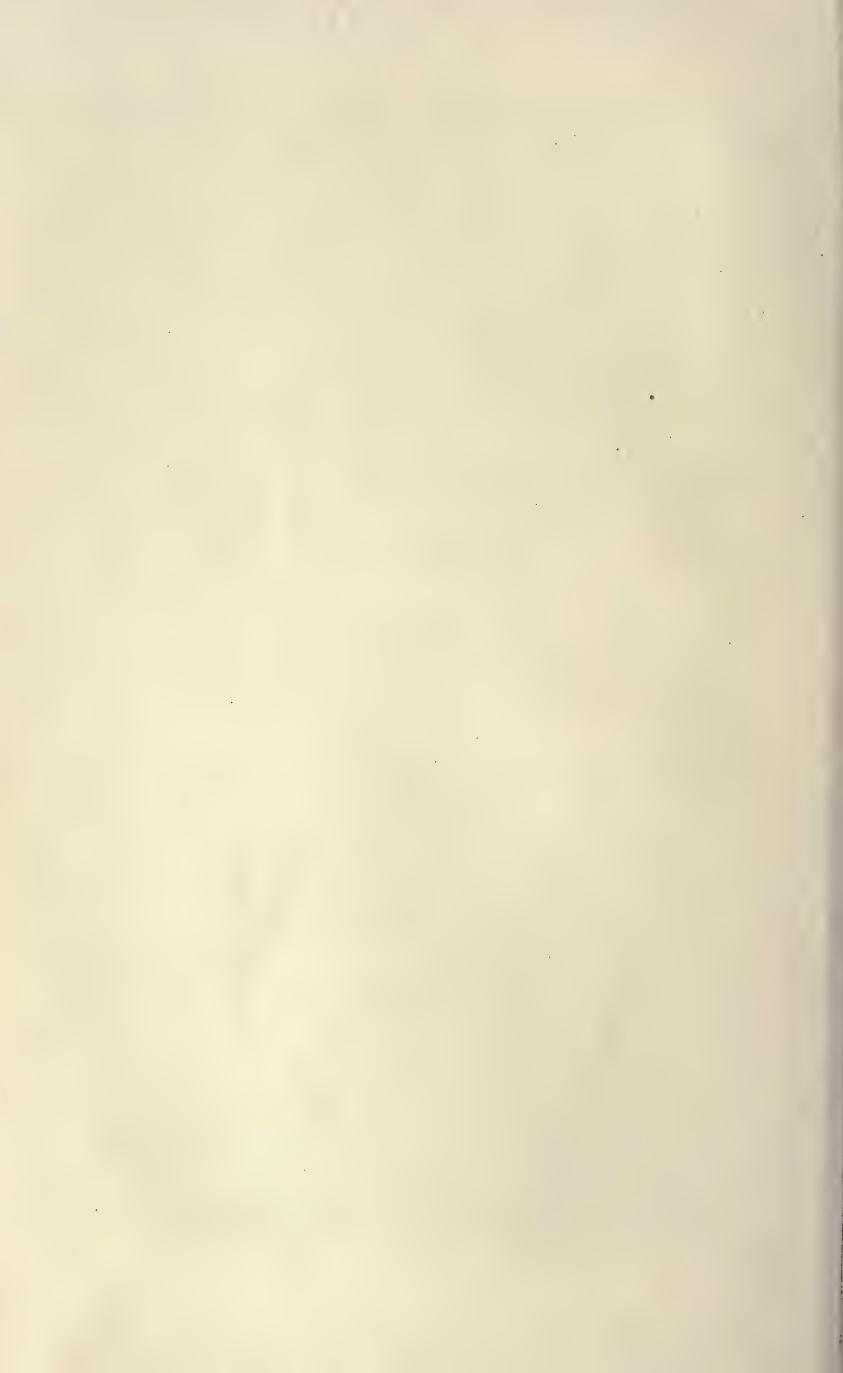
Before white man had set foot in the Maquas or Mohawk country there existed there four Indian castles, called prehistoric, all situated upon tributaries of the Maquas River. On the sites of these prehistoric castles, around the roots of trees since grown, can be found necklaces, arrow-heads, fragments of Indian pottery, and rude instruments of bone and shell and stone for cutting, piercing, and digging. The old castles were built in inaccessible forests, on lofty sites above ravines, and well palisaded with trunks of many trees. These fortifications, constructed often of thousands of trees, were the result of much labor with most primitive weapons. On a platform on top from





SACRED STONE OF THE ONONDAGA INDIANS  
THIS STONE WAS THE NATIONAL ALTAR OF THE  
ONONDAGA INDIANS AROUND WHICH THEY GATHERED  
FROM YEAR TO YEAR TO CELEBRATE JOYOUS  
RELIGIOUS RITES AND TO WORSHIP THE GREAT

HEAVENLY SPIRIT. THE SIDE OF THE  
UPRIGHT STONE THIS VALUABLE HISTORICAL  
RELIC WAS BROUGHT HERE FROM SIOUX PRISON,  
MAY 1901, D.D. C. H. 1942.



which the siege could be resisted, were piled quantities of stones and stored great tanks of water, the latter in defence against the besieger's most formidable weapon,—fire.

The earliest castles known by the white people were three, all south of the river, named for their respective clans—the Turtle, the Bear, and the Wolf—and situated at Auriesville, Fultonville, and Spraker's Basin. In the year 1666 all were destroyed by the French. An interesting table of Indian castles as they were in days of earlier white settlements has been prepared by Mr. S. L. Frey.

After the destruction of these villages in 1666, they were moved to the north side of the river, and all were situated between Fonda and Little Falls.

About 1690 the final remove was probably made to the south side of the river, the villages now being located at Fort Hunter, Fort Plain, and Indian Castle. In the later years of the red man's life in the Mohawk Valley the castles were but two—the upper, or Canajoharie Castle at Danube, and the lower castle (Ti-non-de-ro-ga), at the junction of Schoharie creek with the Mohawk River.

The findings of all these castles differ from those of the prehistoric ones in that they are mixed somewhat with the white man's wares,—rings, arm-bands, Jesuit crosses, iron axes, coins, and modern machine-made wampum.

Before the middle of the seventeenth century, the Jesuit missionary, Jogues, had visited the Mohawk capital and suffered martyrdom with his comrades,—and still others, though more distant, had been captured at the Huron mission and slain by Mohawk braves. Among these were Jogues, Daniel, Broebeuf, Lalemant, Garnier, Garreau. Others met with horrible tortures.

Nevertheless, the Jesuits persevered, Father Lemoyne visiting the Five Nations several times previous to 1658. On September 14, 1667, Fathers Bruyas, Pierron, and Fremin arrived at the capital, Tionnontogen, to renew the Mohawk mission. They fastened a belt of wampum on a pole, affirming that Onontio would so hang the first person to break the new covenant.

St. Mary's Chapel was that year erected. At that mission Fremin, who best understood the tongue, gained some influence and saved some captives from death. Nevertheless, the missionaries were often insulted.

The same year the Jesuit mission of St. Francis Xavier was established at Oneida, and there Father Bruyas met with some measure of success. In October, 1668, Pierron was for a time the only missionary among the Mohawks, but was soon joined by Boniface, under whose guidance the Indians built the Chapel of St. Peter's, near the present Fonda.

At about 1770, a little settlement of Catholic Christian Indians was started on the banks of the



St. Lawrence by a small body of Oneidas and Mohawks, and named La Prairie. To this village, from time to time, came accessions of Praying Indians from the banks of the Mohawk. Among these converts were Kryn, the "Great Mohawk," a prominent chief, and Kateri Tekakwitha, the famous "Lily of the Mohawks."

Boniface was succeeded in 1675 by de Lamber-ville. From 1642 to 1684 has been called the golden age of the Catholic faith among the Iroquois. The termination of the missions in New York was brought about largely by the agency of Governor Dongan, himself a Catholic, who believed the influence of the Jesuits detrimental to the interests of Britain. In the year 1784, De Lamberville, the last Jesuit Mohawk missionary, took his departure for Canada.

The Iroquois built his house by thrusting into the ground a few crotched stakes and covering them with bark. In this long house were lodged several families having right of way in a common central passage. Four families, two on each side, had share in one fire, the smoke of which escaped through an aperture at the top. Did another family claim dwelling in this abode, it was enlarged by an extension at one end. These long and narrow dwellings, twelve or fifteen feet in width, were often one hundred feet or more in length, thus accommodating perhaps twenty families in five sections. At either end a strip of bearskin or of bark suspended from the top answered for

a door. The pot was always boiling and each helped himself as he pleased. No one in an Indian village was allowed to go hungry as long as there was plenty for each. In rude comfort the occupants squatted or lay, each on the mat of rushes assigned him as his own, his feet toward the fire.

Adorned with the plumage and beaks of birds and the claws of beasts, their images tattooed upon his skin, his body in winter time protected by the wild creatures' skins and furs, the stately red man went about his tasks in the wild freedom of savage toil. Delicate was his skill in bone-carving, a lost art when once the European became established upon the soil. Fine was his workmanship in bygone days in arrow-heads of flint and stone and in the construction of pottery and pipes. He shaped for use, too, his own rude and effective tools, the tomahawk and the mortar; he fashioned the birch-bark canoe which shot so picturesquely along the waters of the Mohawk and the Hudson, the Great Lakes and the mighty rivers of the West, and the snowshoe was his invention.

He caught the abundant fresh-water fish in his naked hand or speared it by torchlight at night; he traversed the forests for game. Unlearned in books, the wild man was versed in Nature's lore. The bending twig, the swaying grain, the distant scream, the gentle breeze told eloquent stories to each alert and well-trained sense. The unerring arrow sought its mark; the hunter bore to his lodge his burden of fresh-slain meat, or directed

his docile squaw to fetch it from the forest paths.

A great kettle was kept boiling throughout the winter. One warrior after another threw his contribution into it. This meant that when next the war-cry sounded he would be one of the party. The war-dance took place in February. Decorated with brightest plumage and dazzling war-paint and adorned with the head of the bear, the turtle, or the wolf, the warrior, with savage glee, trod on such occasions the wild measures, amid excited chantings and the beating of the Indian drum. He yelled at the side of an imaginary fire, he flung his tomahawk at the war-post. "Wah-hu! Ho-ha!" was the refrain, in which he joined. Well might the matrons crouch in admiring horror and the Indian lads open wider their wondering eyes. The warrior was accustomed also to recount his own brave deeds and those of his fathers, and to point with pride to the scalps dangling at his belt. His comrades grunted approval.

Any young brave who had secured a following might be a chief.

When the appointed time had arrived, the departing warriors, each provided with a store of cornmeal and a little maple sugar, marched in silence for a few miles. Then, making a halt and selecting a large oak, they stripped from it the bark and left it as a means of information concerning the details of their expedition. A pictured canoe denoted a journey, the number of men

therein symbolized the number of warriors, the figure of some animal, the tribe they would attack. Heralds preceded them on their return, whose manner as well as speech signified the measure of success or defeat. Meanwhile their silent squaws, who had accompanied them thus far on their journey, now returned, bearing with them the warriors' finery, which they had discarded for humbler garb.

Did the trip end in victory, the captives were met near the castle by the women and children arranged in two rows and armed with rods. There the prisoners "ran the gauntlet," dodging the blows as best they might. They were afterward put to death with horrible tortures amid the exultant grunts of their captors. Did a victim bear his sufferings bravely, admiration was rife. It might be some dark-eyed matron, moved by pity or admiration, or stirred by heart hunger at some recent loss, would speak for his life while there was yet time, and adopt him in place of husband or son. Or, if spared for some days from the torture, he might be exchanged for another prisoner.

Was peace to be sought with the enemy, messengers approached him with the calumet, the Pipe of Peace. Through the long reed, tastefully decorated with plumage, the reconciled warriors puffed in turn the smoke, which ascended in fluffy clouds from the soft red marble bowl. Around the council fire they sat and, at each



dramatic pause on the part of the speaker, there passed from one contracting party to the other the binding belt of wampum. Eloquent in the simple poetry of nature were the ancient forests when the red men held their "pow-wows" beneath the grand old boughs!

Deep in the ground the offending tomahawk was laid to rest and the earth above it rendered hard by the tramping of many feet. The forest children were not without their recreations, whether in fierce or merry mood. At the most formal of these the red man was clothed in his full uniform. His regalia have been described as strikingly like those of the Scotch Highlander—his head covering, a turban, a chaplet of feathers or a single quill; his tunic of skins, consisting of pieces for the front and back, neatly joined with thongs; a beaded shoulder sash; a leather belt for arms, knife, and dangling scalps; breech-cloth and kilt of deerskin; high leggings supported by belt and overlapping the moccasins below—all this paraphernalia richly embroidered, it may be, with porcupine quills and an ornamental blanket loosely wrapped over all, lending grace to the warrior's sinewy form; this was the state dress of the red man at his ceremonial feasts.

The Festival of the White Dog was celebrated with horrid rites. It was their New Year's feast and, beginning in early February, was seven days in length. In time this seems to have merged into the Dream Feast which in early days was distinct.

The Dream Feast, in March, was a riot of fantasies. The warriors dreamed and the medicine man interpreted, going out at midnight to gather weird creatures to help him with his charms. All dreamed, and all dreams must be fulfilled. All feigned to be mad and did mad deeds.

Then there were the Maple Feast, when sap began to flow, the Planting Festival, the Strawberry Feast, the Feast of the Green-Corn Moon, and the Harvest Festival.

Once in ten years came the solemn Feast of the Dead, when the bodies of those who had died during the last decade were brought together from their temporary graves. Reverently the bones were scraped and laid together in one huge pit, warmly and richly lined with furs.

Hampers of food were then placed upon this common grave to provide for the journey of the now departing souls which had hitherto lingered about the bodies of the dead.

The Bear, the Wolf, and the Turtle—into these three clans were all the nations divided and with their respective totems were they all adorned. No man might marry into his own clan, and right of descent was held through the female line. In honor of the origin of all mankind when the mother of creation descended into the lower world and was received upon the back of a turtle, the Turtle Clan was accorded highest honor.

The red man had virtues and faults not uncharacteristic of his savage state. He was cruel to

his foes; he was brave, generous, hospitable. The balance of testimony is in favor of his loyalty and gratitude.

The dark-eyed maiden destined one day to become his bride was neatly attired, in a short tunic, or overdress, and a short petticoat wrought with porcupine quills. This embroidery was probably her own work, done with her own bone needle and deer-sinew thread. Her pretty moccasins and leggings came up to meet the skirt and her hair was oiled and hung unconfined or loosely braided down her back. Perhaps, by way of adornment, an eagle's feather was fastened lightly into her raven locks, or perhaps a riband of eelskin was added dyed with sturgeon paste. She wore a blanket over all. Thus adorned she went with her jug to draw water from the Indian well and there she met her pretty squaw comrades.

It may be that her maternal relatives have consulted with those of some young brave and have arranged an advantageous alliance for her. It was customary for her promised husband to come one night to the lodge of the fair one and seat himself beside his bride, who was adorned for the occasion in her best. He previously sent valuable presents of furs and bearskins to the lodge. She now presented him with a cup of sangamon and the twain through this simple ceremony became one, albeit bound by a tie most easily dissolved.

Meanwhile the neighborly squaws were wont to provide for the bride. They would collect for her use firewood enough to last a year. With this outfit she set up housekeeping for herself in her own alcove of the lodge of her people, to which her newly-made husband would thereafter bring the furs and flesh and the products of the chase.

The housekeeping utensils in her apartment of the four-family long house were simple and few. There was the clay bake-kettle in which she cooked, without much previous cleaning, the fish, flesh, and fowl. There were the mortar and pestle with which she ground the corn before it was ready to be simply mixed with water and baked into cakes under the hot ashes; a calabash or two—one for water,—with a basket for carrying beans and maize, and stone and flint for kindling fire. Among the cross-beams above, some of the smaller implements were stored.

It was one of the duties of the squaw to gather the forest fruits, to bring home and preserve the forest game, and to brew the tea from the bark of the sangamon. She worked throughout the day to cultivate the maize, the beans, and squash; she helped to build the wigwam and when, at moving time, occasion called, to bear it upon her back. In winter, when fuel was scarce and snow lay deep, she carried upon her shoulders her burden strap, fastened across the forehead, and searched the drifts for dried branches of trees. She was



not without her privileges. The line in rank of descent was held through her, and it was the voice of the matrons which gave the final decision in a question of peace or war. She reared the young papoose.

This dusky baby she strapped upon his carved and curtained cradle-board and bore his light weight upon her shoulders, or, as she worked, she left him swinging from the dangling branches of a near-by tree. Truly he learned to be stoical in his infancy. He grew to boyhood and indulged with his playmates in wrestling and running, rode the wild pony, shot the lithe arrow, and was taught to bear pain with seeming indifference.

As a youth, he was ambitious to be a warrior; as an old man, a counsellor. Perhaps he forswore other plans to become a medicine-man.

This learned and respected person occupied a unique place in the estimation of his tribe. During the midnight watches, he would issue forth to collect bark and roots and fragrant buds and the flying things that crawled about them or fluttered heavily among the leaves. By means of strange mixtures and mysterious spells, he was expected to do works of magic, to tell fortunes, to cure wounds, to give counsel in matters of love and state. By dint of cunning and device, it was easy to deceive the credulous, in giving exhibitions of his skill.

If he happened to be a chief, he belonged to one of five classes—head-chiefs, warrior-chiefs, pine-

tree-chiefs, war-chiefs, and honorary-chiefs. The head-chiefs acquired their titles by inheritance, deriving them, however, through descent in the female line.

Their election was dependent upon nomination by the oldest near female relative of the recently deceased chief. The new ruler was selected from among her own near kinsmen.

The warrior-chief was attendant to the head-chief, and acted, on occasion, as his deputy. The pine-tree-chief was a self-made man who had risen to position and influence in the community by his own superior and commanding quality of prowess or diplomacy. The honorary-chief was a foreigner, an alien, a visitor, perhaps,—some important guest, probably, upon whom the Iroquois wished to confer a peculiar token of his regard. This honor was not infrequently bestowed upon a white man. The war-chief might be any one who could secure a following. Having once demonstrated his rank, his bravery was, of course, held in higher regard and his position assured.

Finally, whether medicine-man or chieftain, the brave was compelled to leave this beautiful world. Wrapped in his blankets, adorned with his best jewels of claws, plumage, and wampum beads, with his hunting implements at his side, he was buried in a sitting posture in the sandy soil, with a tree at his head to mark his resting-place, awaiting his removal to a common grave with his comrades at the next great Feast of the Dead. Then the

Great Spirit whom he had served in life would guide him afar to that happy region where the giant forests were uncut and the grassy plains were unpolluted by the white man's foot.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY DUTCH AND THEIR SETTLEMENTS

THE light of the seventeenth century dawned upon the Mohawk Valley revealing its savage forests yet unbroken. The eagle darted upon her prey and the leopard reared her cubs. As untrammelled as they, strode the red man with his quiver, seeking skins for raiment and flesh for food. He fished in the historic river on whose banks his squaw, with clumsy bone tools, tilled her patch of squashes and melons, beans and maize. War-paint, Corn Dances, and Mohawk Castles were things of the present. The Dutch pale-faces were not the first to found a trading post at Albany and open commerce with the Iroquois. That distinction is due to the French. About 1540 they had planted a trading post and begun traffic in peltries. Then came the Huguenot war, diverting for many years the attention of the French Government from her American possessions. Freshets destroyed the fort and, in 1614, the Dutch built Fort Nassau upon the ruins and placed Jacob Elkins in command.

In 1603 the French resumed the settlement of



Canada. Many an Iroquois warrior skulking along the St. Lawrence in quest of his Algonquin foe had caught sight of some fair-faced Frenchman; more than once, on westward incursions against hapless Huron, had descried the white-skinned Jesuit about his religious tasks. The fiery, imprudent Champlain had raised the belching cannon against the terror-stricken savages of the Long House, thus dealing the French cause (his own) a blow forever beyond the power of Jesuit policy to heal. The sight of white men at Albany did not present an unfamiliar spectacle. All were ready to be friendly with the peaceful newcomers. The French palefaces had furnished firearms to their Algonquin foes and permitted their ancient enemy, once subdued, to renew their triumph. The Dutch should supply their red brethren with white man's arms and once more Algonquin scalps should dangle from Mohawk belts.

An interesting people were these who drove their trade in pelts and caused the woodman's axe to ring, as they cleared land and built homes in the new-found world,—a race of bravery as old as the known history of Europe. In the age-dimmed annals of the past, it is recorded that the Batavii, most successfully of all German races, resisted the encroachments of all-conquering Rome. Not subdued, but conciliated, they became the allies of Cæsar, not his slaves. In later days their successors, the free Frisians of the same district, alone of all the neighboring races,

preserved their own laws and their own land and bowed not to feudalism. We see in these records the shining beginnings of that spirit which, in later days, illuminated the people of the Netherlands. No doubt it was conducive to the development of "Dutch grit" to wrest, inch by inch, their precious country from the ocean's grip, to build dykes for back-bones and plant cities upon them; where God had placed the sea, thence to redeem the land, and to "drive out the fishes to make room for the cows." No doubt it prepared them for that tremendous struggle for religious liberty in which, with set teeth, the Dutchman refused to be beaten, and, after eighty years of contest, drove out the Spanish aggressor at last. Catholic Spain had demanded change of faith from those Protestant Netherland cities, which built within their limits, as fast as one wall was battered down, another to take its place, and in last extremity, at risk of their own existence, cut the dykes and called on the swelling ocean to sweep the enemy from the land.

In time of peace did Holland excel no less. Her sons invented the thimble and the plough. They loved their sheep and cattle and carefully tended them. Wool and dairy produce brought them wealth. Crusaders returning from the Holy War introduced the arts of distant lands. Such were the spinning of flax, the making of bricks. The fine arts of Italy found apt students among the painstaking Dutch.

## Early Dutch and their Settlements 29

The Netherlands became perennially lovely with luxuriant bloom, the window-gardens gay with flowers. Lace-making flourished in its perfection, and there grew up that soul-appelling school of painting which took for its subject the familiar domestic landscape and the sacred life of the home circle.

The descendants of the Dutch have no reason to be ashamed of their derivation from the race that established the first free school, furnished an asylum for those oppressed by religious persecution, and lent us a part of our Constitution,—a race from which we borrowed the colors of our flag, and which was first to salute officially its freshly fluttering folds.

The queer Dutch vessels scoured the sea, enriching their country by commerce and planting colonies in many climes. In 1609 Hendrik Hudson made his memorable voyage along the noble stream which bears his name. In due time there was effected a settlement on Manhattan Island. In 1614 Hendrick Cortiasen erected a block-house at Fort Nassau, two miles below the site of the future Fort Orange. In 1617 a freshet destroyed this fort and a new one was established, called by the Indians Tawasgunshee, on the banks of Norman's Kil.

In 1623, Fort Orange was established by Cornelis Jacobsen Mey, who is said to have brought with him thirty persons—eight families (chiefly Walloons). The fact of the arrival of families at that

time is, however, disputed, and it is probable that no permanent settlement was effected prior to 1630 when the patroon Van Rensselaer found it to his advantage to rent out his lands to colonists.

Jacobsen Mey proved an efficient leader. Under his direction his followers cleared small spaces for their future homes. For the purpose, among the well-to-do, of avoiding those contrasts so discouraging in an infant community; for the purpose, above all, of economizing the time so needful to providing food supply, the first dwellings were of the simplest, merely neatly wood-lined ground caverns arched with spars, thatched with bark or sod.

The industry of the settlers was repaid, and teeming nature lent a willing hand. Grains of Indian corn, once planted, Holland-bought seeds as well, soon sprouted and grew rapidly and high. Berries, wild grapes, and nuts flourished in profusion. Kneeling, in strawberry season, upon the grass, one could eat the sweet wild berries to the full.

Flocks of pigeons, fall and spring, yielded themselves season after season to the hunter's ready rifle and the house-wife's luscious pigeon-pies. Venison was to be had in the forest and the river teemed with fish. Wrote home to the mother-country an enthusiastic son:

Had we cows, hogs, and other animals fit for food (which we daily expect in the first ship), we would not



wish to return to Holland, for whatever we desire in the paradise of Holland is found here.

In 1630, the patroon Van Rensselaer colonized a grant of land about twenty-four miles each side the Hudson River, including Fort Orange, which now began to be truly settled.

About 1648, we find that to the shabby little fort of twenty-five or thirty wooden houses have been gradually added some of brick and stone, with three-fourths of the people engaged in the flourishing trade that conferred upon it the name of Beverwyck.

In 1617, upon the hill of Tawasentha, near Norman's Kil, on the site of an ancient Indian castle, the white man and the red smoked together the pipe of peace and kept bright the covenant chain, which never grew dull or rusty until the future years when the Briton set a price upon the American scalp.

Fascinating Beverwyck, good Dutch mother of the white dwellers in the Mohawk Valley, among whom for many years her Dutch customs were perpetuated! There, on winter evenings, sat the "wilden" at the fireside, listening curiously to the mother's lullaby to her babe in its hooded cradle. There, in summer months, built the birds on the roof of the high-arched, double-benched stoep, where, at nightfall, the good vrouw chatted with her neighbors and mynheer smoked his long-stemmed pipe. Up the street then came the

herdsman with his horn, leading the faithful kine, each stopping at her own home to be milked.

Meanwhile, as early as 1642, strange events were transpiring among the red men, a few miles farther west. The Jesuits, noble and learned men, devoted to the tenets of their faith, had been already for some years at work in their missions among the Hurons and neighboring Indian tribes. Three of these unhappy men, René Goupil, Guillaume Couture, laymen, and Isaac Jogues, a priest, while in canoes with a party of Hurons upon Lake St. Peter, were seized by a war party of Mohawks, and, amid tortures which shall be nameless, so horrible and dread were they, escorted to the Indian Castles upon the Mohawk, for still greater tortures yet reserved. To the relief of these French prisoners three Albany Dutchmen were sent. No entreaties, no prayers, no money value would avail for a ransom, but, for the time being, their lives were spared.

Couture was presently adopted and removed to another village. René, "the good René," died by the assassin's tomahawk, having been observed to make the sign of the cross, which the Dutch had once taught the Indians was bad. Jogues was allowed to linger on, dragging out a wretched existence. The Huron captives he made his especial care, but his constant prayers before a cross and his refusal to eat food prepared for the demon Aireskoi caused much suspicion.

The body of Goupil had been thrown by chil-

dren into a ravine, but Jogues was able to rescue it and give it temporary burial. In the summer of 1643, the young priest, with the help of the Dutch, secretly took passage for New York and thence to France, which he reached in great destitution.

Soon after, the Mohawks inclined to peace, for which they sued. A mission was again established. Jogues, who had returned, was sent at his own risk. Well received on an embassy which he performed, he left his trunk with them for a short time, intending to return. Meanwhile this little box brought contagion upon the Indians and blasted their crops. He found the chiefs in war-paint. He was threatened and tortured. The Bear, the Wolf, and the Tortoise sat in conclave and the latter two voted for his life, but the Bear slew him at an entertainment to which he had been invited. His companion, Lalande, met with a similar fate.

Arendt Van Curler, a cousin of the patroon Van Rensselaer, early came to this country, and became the director of Rensselaerwyck. So wise and just was he in his dealings that he was beloved by all. Particularly was he in favor with the Indians, so much so that they adopted his name, Corlaer, as meaning *Governor*, and from that time forward every ruler was dubbed "Corlaer." In 1642, there fell into the hands of the Indians those unhappy Frenchmen who, in the unflinching pursuit of religious duties, had angered the superstitious savages and been put to torture. The offer of



six hundred florins for ransom was refused, although the promise was given that the prisoners' lives should be spared.

Three citizens of Albany had been sent to the Indian Castle at Caughnawaga, in mercy, to effect their relief. Arendt Van Curler, who was one of the three, wrote, one year later, a letter to the Holland patroons, in which he referred quaintly to this visit to the "Maquas country," where three Frenchmen were kept prisoners, among them a Jesuit, a very learned man, whom they "treated very badly by cutting off his fingers and thumbs."

An earlier letter reads: "A half day's journey from the colonie, on the Mohawk river, there lies the most beautiful land that the eye of man ever beheld." This same "most beautiful land" was destined to be the future home of its admirer and to be called by his name.

The patroon system, carried out to its ultimate results, did not prove the system adapted to liberty-loving Hollanders. The director himself, the wise Van Curler, cousin of the patroon, became educated out of it.

In the year 1662, there marched along the present Clinton Avenue of Albany and as far as Norman's Kil, a party of fourteen men, with their families, led by Van Curler. Northward thence along the old Indian trail of blazed trees they wended their way until they reached the site of an ancient Indian village—the Great Flats, a plateau or spur of the Helderbergs, secure above the rise



of the Mohawk. Governor Schuyler had granted permission to settle this fertile land, and the pale-faces bought it of their red brethren in regular form. In July, 1631, the Indians gave the deed to "Schonowe" and signed it with their rude totem effigies: Cantuquo, a Bear; Aiadane, a Turtle; Sonareetsie, a Wolf.

A district sixteen miles long and eight miles wide became the selected site, and on the eastern end of this long projecting peninsula they laid out their village, 1200 feet in width, comprising 175 acres, in four subdivided blocks, and stockaded it with posts of pine and piled-up earth, with block-houses at the gates and angles and a passageway inside for the patrol of troops. Each family was assigned a house lot in the village, a farm on the flats, a bit of pasture land and a garden site on the lowland. The infant settlement had furthermore, on three sides, natural defences of marsh-land and water.

Thus was begun that settlement of the Mohawk Valley which the Indians called "Corlaer." After the conquest of New York by the English, it became known by an aboriginal name. When the red man had abandoned his castle near the hill of Tawasentha, that ancient site became known as the *Place outside the Door*. Another westward removal and that name was applied to the present fair and bustling city of Schenectady, which bears on its seal an ear of corn—corn-ear—Corlaer, the insignia of its founder.

On May 20, 1664, the surveyor, S' Jacques Cortelyou, was directed to lay out land at Schenectady, surveying in those days being accomplished in the simplest way, such as stepping off or measuring with ropes. When all lands within the bounds of the little grant were cultivated, it became necessary to extend its limits. This was done by means of two Indian deeds, extinguishing aboriginal claims.

Part of agreement between Inhabitants of Schenectady and four Mohawk Castles, 3d July, 1672:

Inhabitants of Schenectady Together with sartain Indians called Dohorywachqua and Crage, representing four Mohawk Castles, MADE A Sale of Lands Lying Neare the Towne Schanhectade within Three Dutch Myles in compasse on boath Sides of y<sup>e</sup> River Westwards which endes in Hinaquariones where the Last Battell Wass between the Mohoaks and the North Indians for y<sup>e</sup> summe of Six hundred hands of good Wheyte Wampum Six Koates of Duffels, Thirty barres of Lead and Nine bagges of powder Which They doe promis unto y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Indians in two Terms, viz., The first as soon as the Sachems or any person by them authorized shall Comme out of ye Country according to Theyre usuall manner and have Thereupon delivered unto ye said Indians as a present for the old man in the Mohawk Country a Rundlet of brandy,—To the end all Misunderstanding and Complaints May be Washt of and Removed.

*Guan-ho-ha* = door; *S'Gaun-ho-ha* = the door =

*Schonowe*; *Hac-ta-tie* = without. S'Gaun-ho-ha-hac-ta-ta; S'Gaun-hac-ta-tie.

Thus is given one explanation of the origin of the name Schenectady. Albany, once the door of the Mohawk country, became afterward its Schenectady—our present Schenectady being at that time the chief town. Afterward as the Castles drew westwardly it became, in its turn, *Outside the Door*. Some writers, however, give the meaning simply as *Beyond the Pine Plains*, referring from the Albany standpoint to the great plains between that town and Schenectady.

To the white man's village established on the site of their early Castle the Indians gave the name "Corlaer." The Governor himself denominated it *Schonowe*, and the French knew it as *Les nouvelles habitations hollandaises*.

Mr. Pearson tells us that some of the early settlers were actually without surnames. Some of the interesting examples he gives are these: *Knickerbacker*—maker of knickers (children's marbles) or small china wares;

*de Steenbacker*—brick-maker;

*Storm Van Der Zee*—born during a storm at sea;

*Kleyn Isaak*—little Isaack, etc.

The beginnings of state in the infant settlement were quaint indeed.

In 1675, August 30, the "Commisaryes" of the town received orders that "you are to Keep Court 2d Tuesday in every moneth, you are to judge as farre as putting in the Stocks or ffine,

not exceedig fforty Guilders Beavers." For larger fines or cases requiring more serious discipline appeals must be made to the court at Albany. They were also ordered not to sell liquor to Indians unless sellers were licensed.

A good woman of Schenectady, however, obtained some relief in this regard, after her petition had been duly considered "At a Councill held in Fort James, Jan. 27, 1672-3."

Juffrow Curler's Petition from Schanectade desiring some ffavors about Liberty to trade with the Indyans in regard of her great Losse by the ffire . . . she may for her p'sent Reliefe bee soe far indulged as to have Licence to sell some Rumme to ye Indyans as also some quantity of Powder and Lead.

This request was granted so far as the "Rumme to the Indyans" was concerned "for ye space and terme of whole yeare and two months after the Date hereof," but the powder right it was not thought best to bestow.

The Court Records, 1678, April 3d, mention the sale of a "neegher, Jacob, twenty-four yrs. old, to Sweer Teunise for one hundred good whole beaver skins," while a case which must have excited much comment at the time was brought up at Albany on Sept. 17, 1686, when complaint was made:

Yt Bennony Arentse doth most crewelly and barbarously Beat y<sup>e</sup> Daughter of Vielè deceased of w<sup>h</sup> he is the step-father w<sup>h</sup> child being stood before ye



justices of the Peace is found all blak and blew and ye said Bennony being sent for by a Warrant and appearing before ye justices doth excuse himself. Because she is a whole night and somethinge half a night out a seeking cows.

We are glad to know that the magistrates promptly placed the child in the hands of competent trustees.

The people of the new settlement of Schenectady were from the first given to dabbling in the Indian trade. The participation of Schenectady interfered with the profits of those at Albany and such traffic at the latter place was formally prohibited June 7, 1669.

Nevertheless Governor Andros finds himself sorely tried in June, 1678, by the "frequent goeing off wagons or carts between this place and Skinnectady. Uppon verry slight or frivolous occasions or Pretenses." Such vehicles he therefore restrained from similar errands for the space of three months except upon "Extraordinary occasions" with the consent of the magistrates and then only when carrying no goods upon "Penalty off forfeiting all such waggons or carts and horses."

But greater woes than these were at hand. The white man had moved into the "Maquas' Land" and must suffer with them. The red man's version of the origin of the long enmity between the Adirondacks and the Five Nations is this:

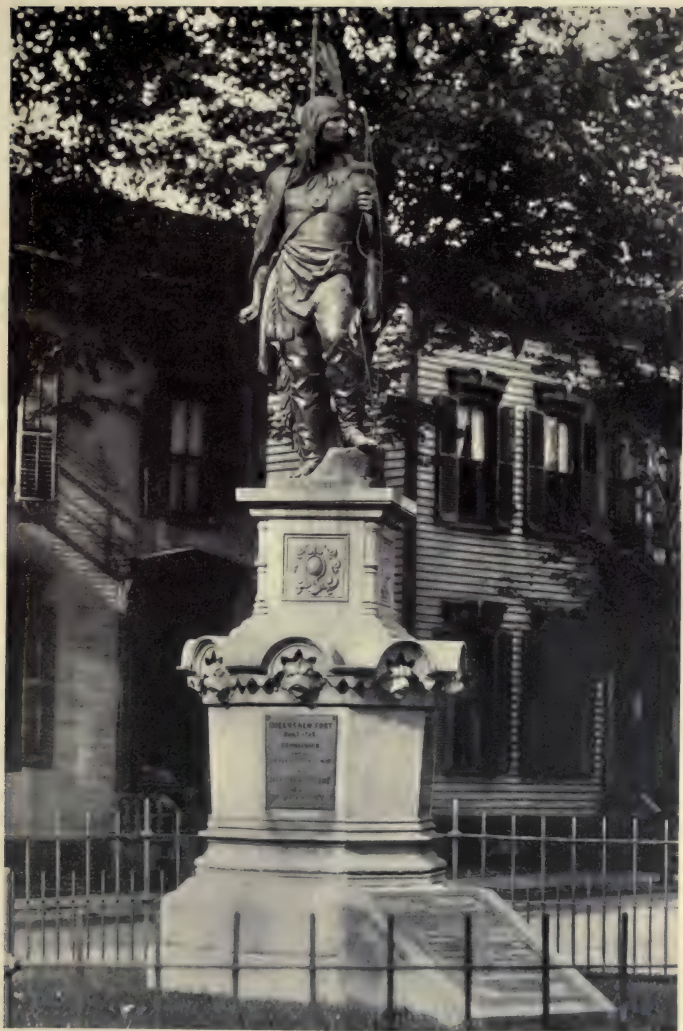
The Five Nations used to be planters of corn

but the Adirondacks were great hunters. They therefore traded with one another. But once when the game was scarce some of the young men of the Five Nations assisted in the hunt. Their prowess finally aroused the jealousy of their allies, who murdered some of them. The complaint of the Five Nations brought but inadequate punishment. Living near the site of the present Montreal, they were compelled to flee, but, finally, after subduing some of their nearer and weaker neighbors, they gained courage and strength to face their old enemy, whom they, in turn, subdued and forced to flee.

Soon after, the French arrived at Quebec and accompanied the Adirondacks in an expedition against the Iroquois. The French and Indian Wars were well under way. They continued, with intermissions, through many years, both parties undergoing alternations of victory and defeat, and in the distress of the Iroquois the Mohawk white men shared.

In February, 1665, the French and Indians under Monsieur De Courcelles, Governor of Canada, who were well on their way, amid great privation and hardship incidental to their midwinter trip, resolved to do damage to their Indian foes by a blow directed at Albany. Misled by their guide and in great distress, they were obliged to throw themselves on Schenectady for the succor which they received.

In 1689, the Iroquois visited devastation upon



The Site of Queen's Fort, Schenectady  
Photograph by A. J. White





Canada, and now retaliation was hourly expected. Soon another army on snow-shoes started for Albany.

Suffering severely, as on their abortive expedition of 1665, they finally decided to change the course and make Corlaer the object of their vengeance.

Colonel Glen at his Scotia home had heard beforehand of the approach of the French and dispatched a squaw to warn the inhabitants, under cover of selling brooms. On the afternoon of February 8, 1690, Dominie Tassomacher, it is said, was being entertained with chocolate at the home of a charming widow of his parish, when the squaw unceremoniously entered. The sight of the snow upon her newly scrubbed floor aroused the indignation of the widow, who spoke sharply to her unexpected and careless guest. In high dudgeon, the Indian woman replied, "It will be soiled enough before to-morrow." It may be stated, however, that the above is but a bit of gossipy tradition.

That night, at midnight, the town of Corlaer, enclosed within a rectangular wall, was entered by one of its two gates left open to the foe. A day of feasting, an hour of sleep, and it awoke to death. It lay helpless at the mercy of two hundred and ten French and Indian foes, of whom eighty were "Praying Indians" of Caughnawaga. Several—old people and children—were spared. A few others only escaped sword and flame and fled, half-clad, through the freezing cold to Albany.

Alexander Lindsay Glen, Scotch by origin and

Dutch by adoption, one of the early and respected proprietors of the Schenectady Patent, who had named his home Scotia for the land of his birth, was remarkable for his kindness to white man and red alike. In days gone by, the Mohawks had once brought him a Jesuit, whom they had captured, that he might be locked in a closet and tortured in the morning. Although warned by Colonel Glen that Jesuits were witches who could escape through keyholes, they disregarded the statement, and themselves locked the closet with the proffered key. They gave themselves to drunken orgies for the night, to find in the morning their friend's prediction but too true. They did not suspect the existence of a duplicate key, or that the hogshead which had left the mansion in the morning for Albany contained—not salt, but a Frenchman. Now, therefore, on the morning after the massacre, Colonel Glen stood ready, at his Scotia home, to defend his family and himself, but he and they and home were spared for his kindness to the French priest of long ago.

The little Dutch settlement of Schenectady was never again so wholly Dutch. Innumerable quaint articles were burned, many a family record was consigned to oblivion, and, except for a paragraph gathered here and there by chance, a most interesting chapter of Mohawk Valley history is sealed to the world.

Albany 28 March, 1690.

List of the Goods sent from York and received from

Mons Jan Hendricksen Brujn and Johannes Proofoost to be distributed among the Refugees of Schornechte, to wit—

2348½ Dutch ells of Osenb: Linen

3 p<sup>s</sup> Serge

13 p<sup>rs</sup> Stockings

72 ells pennestout

and delivered to the Deacons of Schornecte and the Deacons of Albany—

Oh, the “List of the Linen distributed in the Bush (Woestine),” and the grand old Dutch names whose owners received “one pair of stockings” each!

Schenectady rose from her ashes and by the early years of the next century was second in importance only to Albany. A busy little place it was, with its manufactures of sewant, and its boat-building, and its boys and girls, skilled in the Indian tongue, acting as interpreters, the canoes at *handel tyde*—June, July, and August—resting on the quiet waters, and the young men in the winter setting off with trinkets, blankets, and firewater to deal in the Indian trade.

The streets of the Martyrs and of the Traders, of Front, Ferry, Church, and Niskayuna, were then in existence, and along them stood neat little houses patterned after the Albany style, a story or a story and a half in height, gable end to the street, adorned with sheet-iron weather-cocks, dates often inscribed in iron anchors upon the baked “steenen.”

Here on the porches, as at Albany, the family often gathered at the evening tide.

Here were the swelling ovens at the kitchen rear and the double doors shut at bottom so that the toddlers could n't get out and the light could get in.

A scow ran from the foot of Ferry Street. State Street was *Souder Hook* and *Launt hauck* was the Land Gate, while *Calvyres wastyea* (Calves' pasture) lay between Front Street and the river.

Up to the time of the Revolution, old Dutch expressions were preserved in the Dutch settlements clustered around the lower Mohawk. Then baked stone was "gebakken steen," negro slaves were "de negen slaaven," corn was "koorn," doors were "deuren," and the people said "Gooden morgen" or "Hoe vaart giÿ!"

Discreetly, of a pleasant summer afternoon, the good dames having cleared away the midday meal, attired themselves in their best homespun, or, it might be, silk, and in high-heeled slippers and blue and white gored hose, stepped daintily out to the home of the good wife who had invited them to tea. They wore short skirts, high caps, and bodices with work-bags fastened to their belts and scissors also suspended therefrom.

The hour of arrival was shortly after noon, and even now the good dames were not idle. Spinning and knitting served pleasantly to employ the time, while busy tongues were as usefully engaged in domestic lore until in due season the



nice round table standing primly let down beside the wall was brought into place and into use, the table-board elevated into position. The finest linen table-cloth was now spread, and pewter cups, saucers, and plates were arranged confidently around the central steaming dishes, while the dear, quaint old caps of our Dutch grandmas soon completed a circle in response to the invitation "Come, Vrouwlay, sit yully baye."

All this Mr. Toll describes in his *Narrative of Schenectady*, as well as the sugar bowl in the centre, the plate of dried beef, the dish of pot-cheese, the "krullers," "olakoecks," and "wauffles," with the lump of maple sugar beside each plate, and the maid who passed around the circle with a teapot of tea in one hand and of hot water in the other, to be scolded in choice Dutch if any were poured where it did not belong. At the close of the meal, out were brought the snuff-boxes and daintily tapped, after which the good vrouws took liberal pinches therefrom.

The hour of four or five witnessed the departure that home duties might not suffer, and if there were not a tall Dutch clock in the corner to tell the time, there were not wanting dames who could tell the hour by the sun.

Attractive, too, were the holiday evenings at the hospitable mansion of Colonel Sanders, with the good cheer and the after-dinner dance and the black fiddler standing on a chair.

In regard to the earliest educational oppor-

tunities of the day, it is known that the first school in Schenectady was under the direction of Dominie Peter Tassomacher, the pastor of the First Dutch Church.

An interesting bill of later date has been handed down to us and is here appended:

|  |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|
| Mr. Jno. J. Schermerhorn to Thos. Neilson Dr | £  | s  | d  |
| schooling 2 children from ye 17th April      |    |    |    |
| 1738 to ye 21 November, being 7 months       | 1  | 8  | 7  |
| Schooling 2 children from ye 21st April      |    |    |    |
| 1739 to ye last December Being 8 mo          | 1  | 13 | 4  |
| 2 Psalters                                   |    | 5  |    |
|  | 3  | 6  | 11 |
| Abatement for ye children Being at           |    |    |    |
| Home at Harvest                              |    | 6  | 11 |
|  | £3 | 0  | 0  |

The account was properly audited, as witness the following:

Schenectady ye mo March 1739-40. There appeared before me Nicholas Schuyler Esq. one of his Majesties justices of ye Peace for ye County of Albany, ye above Thomas Neilson and made oath on ye Holy evangelist of Almighty God that ye above acct according to the best of his knowledge is a just and Fair account Jurat Corma made.

THOS. NEILSON.

Nich. Schuyler.

On the reverse side of which is:

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Recd from Mr. C. Schermerhorn three pounds New York Currency, Being the full Contents of the Acct, on the other side, and is in full of Dets, Accts and Demands Whatsoever to this 24th March, 1739-40.

I say recd by me

THOS. NEILSON.

Witnesseth

ANNA WENDOL

£3 0 0

Very early in their history the good people of Schenectady effected a church organization and

The Commissaries of Schanectade made application to the Governor—at a Council Held in New Yorke September the 6th 1678 that the fifth plaine or flatt Land on the other side of the Maques River may be disposed of for a Minist' Reader &c.

A house of worship was erected by 1684 through the generosity of Alexander Lindsay Glen, and even before that the congregation had received some pastoral service at the hands of the Rev. Gideon Schaets, who journeyed thither from Albany for that purpose once in three months. The first pastor, regularly called in 1682 or thereabout, was the Rev. Petrus Thessenmaecker, who perished in the terrible massacre of 1690. The confusion prevailing for some years thereafter prevented the resumption of services until 1694, from which time the Rev. Godfriedus Dellius of Albany supplied the people of Schenectady, at intervals, for five years.

In 1701, a subscription was started for a second

church to replace the first. This church was completed by 1703 and is supposed to have been of stone.

In 1700, the accomplished Rev. Bernardus Freeman became the second regular pastor, whose first bill for services is here inserted.

Aug 25, 1700

16 mar 1700 to 25 aug the Consistory is indebted to Dominie Freeman.

For current salary from the 16 march to the 25th of august is five months and nine days and amounts to a sum of fifty pounds and something more,—is in sewant gl 2000

Also expenses incurred on the voyage in fresh provisions, wine, brandy, vegetables and hens, besides about three weeks expenses on the Isle of Wight is the sum of gl 3.74

Schenectady—BARNHARDUS FREEMAN

Whole amt \$296.75

The reverend gentleman was not without his troubles, for the minutes of the Common Council held in Albany, September 3, 1700, record:

The Church wardens of Shinnechtady doe make application that two persons be appointed to go around among the inhabitants of the Citty to see if they can obtain any Contribution to make up ye Sellary due their minister.

Dominie Thos. Brouwer who took charge of the parish July, 1714, received a yearly salary of



## Early Dutch and their Settlements 49

forty lbs., dwelling free of rent, firewood at the door, a large garden and free pasture for two cows and a horse.

Rev. Reinhardus Erichson who was called March 30, 1728, was offered the equivalent of \$250 in salary, a well-conditioned parsonage, a garden "kept in a fence," pasturage for two cows and a horse, and firewood at the door. During his pastorate the Third Dutch church of Schenectady was built.

As to the legal customs of the time we might say that Schenectady of those days was a part of Albany County, and an interesting act of Legislature was passed during the winter of 1702-03, "that the breed of wolves in this colony may be wholly rooted out and extinguished." The price paid in that county for a full-grown wolf killed by "either Christians or Indians" was ten shillings. A whelp brought one-half that price.

We append two other interesting items of the period:

Schoneghtendie April 5, 1735

Then received from Symon Veder, town treasurer, the yust and full sune of tre Shilling Corant mony, itt beeing for my Negroo worcks that he has Done for whipping the negro need in this town.

j said Received by Mee

ARENT BRAT.

Schoneghtendie April 18, 1727

then Reced by me, from Symon Veder, treasurer the ful and yust sum of forty two pound 10 Shiling

Corant monny of the Colleny of nïew Yôrck, for my sallery as assemblman for the sd town for the last year.

Said Reced by mee

KAREL HAENSEN TOLL

There exist some reminders of the Dutch period in several buildings still preserved. There is the Van Guysling homestead at the present Rotterdam, believed by some to have been built as early as 1664 and possibly antedating the Mabie House. There is the Bradt house, an ancient building of brick, of the date of 1736. There is part of one of the buildings of Schermerhorne Mills, dating from 1715 or thereabout, and there is Johannes Peek's house, erected in 1711.

The Mabie House, built by Jan Mabie, a Hollander, in 1689, a stone structure, still stands, a worthy memorial of the past, with its tiny panel windows and double doors. Six miles from Schenectady, it escaped by its distance the destructive raid of 1690, and is, in all probability, the oldest house in the Mohawk Valley.

The Glen-Sanders mansion, at Scotia, beautifully situated on the north bank of the Mohawk, is standing, with its double doors and the date of erection, 1713, anchored in iron on its sides. A notable edifice is this, still in possession of the old-time family of its owners—a veritable museum of antiquity, furnished from cellar to garret with strongly built, elegant furniture two centuries old.



The Glen-Sanders House

Photograph by J. J. Wing





Actuated by the same motives, sprung of the same blood, other Albany Dutch had left their fostering mother and located in the neighborhood of Schenectady at about the same time. "Co-nis-ti-gio-no"—extensive cornflats—is given as the origin of the name Niskayuna, applied to a settlement in the vicinity. At this point was early erected a school-house, used on Sundays for divine service and known as a Galat House or Prayer-house. By 1760 they had established a church modelled after the fashion of the times, with a gallery opposite the pulpit, raised benches below along the sides for the men, and seats in the centre for women. \*

In reference to early patents and grants we know that the half-breed woman, Illetje Van Olinde, was given by the Indians the "great island at Niskayuna" in 1667, and at Albany is recorded, March 4, 1682:

Rhode, Sachem of the first Mohawk Castle Sagod-dioquisax Sachem of the second Castle and Todoairse, in place of his grandfather, the late Caniachkor sell in presence of the other Mohawk Sachems to Jan Mangelse, a piece of woodland near Canastyione on the other side of the river stretching up the river from the upper end of the land of Claesen Van Budhoven at a tree marked with the mark of Harman Vedder and Barent Ryndertsen and running along the river over a Kil called by the Indians Otskondaraogoo, included in the sale, to a large oak tree, marked by the Indians and Jan Mangelse's mark and stretching up the

woods as far as Jan Mangelse or his heirs shall have occasion to use it.

At about the same time as the settlement of Niskayuna occurred that of Waterford and part of Half-Moon.

At Beverwyck, May 27, 1664,

Philipp Pieterse Schuyler and Goosen Gerretsen Van Shaick, residents of the village of Beverwyck Mahikanders

filed a petition to be permitted to purchase from the Indians lands on which certain "English of Connecticut" were casting covetous eyes. This petition was granted and the purchase was known as the Van Shaick or Half-Moon patent.

The parts first to be cultivated were Van Shaick's, Cohoes or Adams Island, and Havre Island. Here, before the later 1600's, farms had been established. In 1677, a transfer had already been made and Jacobse Van Nourstrandt had bought of the widow of Mr. Van Shaick, Havre (Oat) Island, called by the Indians "Malhahendach," and a part of Half-Moon. The worth of a bear skin was about three dollars, and sixty-seven of these furs or their equivalent in grain or cattle was to be the price of the land.

The beginnings of Troy may be traced in the purchase made in 1659 from the Indians of a Great Meadow between Poesten Kil and Meadow Creek—all now covered by the present city. The

death of Wemp in 1637 and the remarriage of his widow to Sweer Teunise Van Velsen caused the latter to come into possession of the above property in 1667. By judicious purchases from the Wilden the manor of Rensselaer gradually extended its limits until including more than twenty-one miles, of which the site of old Troy is known on the map as "Parfraets' Dael." It was named for Maria Parfraets, afterward Van Rensselaer, mother of the patroon, although another rendering interprets the words as the "Paradise of a lazy man." In 1720, there were confirmed to Derich Vander Heyden four hundred and ninety acres, including the present Troy, at a yearly quit-rent of "three and one-quarter bushels of wheat and four fat hens."

The land on which stands the city of Cohoes, once belonging to the manor of Rensselaerwyck, had been purchased from the Indians as early as 1630, a line running east and west through the Falls of Cohoes marking the northern border of the manor. Settlers from Niskayuna, Waterford, and Albany colonized the district early in the 1700's. The land north of the manor line was granted by the Indians to Mrs. Illetje Van Slyck Van Olinde, a half-breed. One generation later Daniel Van Olinde, her son, sold to Walran Clute a plot of more than one hundred acres with the right to build one or more "Saw Mills or Grind Mills and to Ly Dams."

This was done: "In consideration of forty-

two pounds of currant Lawfull money of New Yorke."

The Cohoes Falls, of whose beauty we can dream before factories disfigured the banks and drew off the waves, and when protecting forests skirted Mohawk waters, were greatly admired by early travellers. One of the first to visit them was "Dominie" Megapolensis, who settled in Albany in 1642. He described the waters, "as clear as crystal and as fresh as milk," and spoke of the rainbow that spanned them from shore to shore, the denizens of countless fish, and the three-pronged instruments with which the Indians drew them up.

It is said that the name "Cahoos" signifies "little hollows" (cradle holes), but another derivation pretty generally adopted is "Gahaoose" supposed to mean "shipwrecked canoe."

Of the Dutch settlers of the Hudson and Mohawk it has been said:

Among Hollanders it was always a cardinal principle to live within one's means.<sup>1</sup>

Every man spent less than he had coming in, be that what it would, and he would be thought to have lived a year to no purpose who had not realized a sum to lay by at the end of it.<sup>2</sup>

The children of such ancestors were well fitted to

<sup>1</sup> Brodhead's *History of New York State*, vol. i., p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.





The Mabie House, 1689

Photograph by J. J. Wing



act an important part in the great work of opening the continent of America to the civilization of Europe. They added no ignoble ingredient to the Union's blended masses.<sup>1</sup>

The emigrants who first explored the coast and reclaimed the soil of New Netherland and bore the flag of Holland to the wigwams of the Iroquois were generally bluff, plain-spoken, earnest yet unpresumptuous men who spontaneously left their native land to better their condition and bind another province to the United Netherlands. They brought over the liberal ideas and honest maxims and homely virtues of their country. They introduced their churches, their schools, their dominies and their schoolmasters. They carried along with them their huge clasped Bibles and left them heirlooms in their families.<sup>2</sup>

Nowhere among the people of the United States can now be found excelling in honesty, industry or accomplishments the posterity of the early Dutch settlers in New Netherland.<sup>3</sup>

From Spafford's *Gazetteer*:

As the Dutch were the original proprietors and first colonists, so their numbers were the greatest, as were their possessions also, and the most valuable. No foreign emigrants selected for richness of soil with so much care, and next in this respect were the Germans. Nor have any others preserved their ancient possessions entire in the line of posterity

<sup>1</sup> Brodhead, vol. i., p. 747.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 748.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 750.

as those, nor their distinct national manners and habits.

It would not be difficult to lengthen greatly this list of compliments paid by their admirers to the early Dutch settlers, but we would not be one-sided. Let us, therefore, remark that generations ago the poet Dryden said of the people of the "Land of the Dykes":

Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation;  
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion.

The Dutch are naturally conservative in the extreme, and somewhat suspicious of strangers, and our Albany fathers were sometimes criticised as unsocial—by those who had not made their acquaintance.

A visitor at Albany (Kalm) in 1749 remarks that "the women were sometimes pretty, but awkward," and that their husbands were apt to address to them scarcely thirty words a day. We do not for a moment doubt, however, that it was a considerable compensation to one of these good women that, as the stranger adds, her husband, when not actively employed at out-of-door tasks, remained always in her society, and when he did open his mouth, he never omitted to say "My love."



## CHAPTER III

### THE PALATINES

WHILE the Hollander was fighting his battles for freedom and extending his dominion and enlarging his powers by industry and enterprise, his quiet German neighbor was cultivating the vine and gathering crops on the banks of his beloved Rhine, that uncertain boundary between Germany and France,—a region which Louis XIV always earnestly hoped to call his own. In this district the Protestant faith early found a home. Here flourished alike the Lutheran church and the Dutch Reformed, and in 1685, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, thither, as to Holland, many Huguenot French fled for refuge. Louis ravaged the country with fire and sword. In the same year, on the death of the Elector Charles, another pretext came for war. Louis claimed the throne for his brother, whose wife was the dead man's sister. In 1688, the French monarch gave shelter to the deposed James II and supported his claim to the British throne. England and Holland entered the Grand Alliance against France. The persecuted Palatinate suffered in

blood and fire, as the beautiful Rhine-bordering ruins to-day attest. War lasted nine years. On its heels came that of the Spanish succession, which endured for twelve. Marching against these foes, the armies of France made highways through the land of the Palatines, destruction ever in their wake. The conflict terminated in 1713.

One year was specially marked in the annals of renewed desolation, when, at the hands of an army commanded by Marshal Villars, such scenes of carnage were renewed as had rendered 1688 memorable. This was the year 1707.

In 1708, arrived the first of the stream of emigration to visit England,—having been transported from Holland, whither they first made their way. In 1709, the second swarm appeared—for swarm it was—from the parent hive. By October there were thirteen thousand poor Palatines adrift upon London,—a wretched stream of humanity,—and penniless. With memorable kindness England met the emergency. She housed the homeless in tents. Her citizens erected shelters,—they fed the starving masses and considered measures for their future good. Ireland received a detachment, and we hear with pride that at Munster, their new home, they preserved the traditions of their fatherland, led honest and upright lives and that their thrifty habits had brought them wealth. The Carolinas and Virginia received their quota, worthily represented by their descendants of to-day.

There is a story, probably well grounded in truth. At the time when Peter Schuyler, then Mayor of Albany, and Colonel Nicholson visited London to urge the need of more adequate defence against the French and their Indian allies, they were accompanied by five Mohawk chieftains. The Palatines were then in the city. It is said that the hearts of the swarthy warriors were touched, and that they offered the Queen for the suffering people a grant of their land in Schoharie.

However this may be, it is certain that the detachment which in 1710, under the leadership of Governor Hunter, sailed for the Empire State had always in mind the promised land in the valley of Schoharie. After a voyage of suffering and many deaths, the remnant was quartered for five months longer upon Nutten Island, that being adjudged "the proper place" to harbor them.

It is well here to take passing notice of these "poor people," whose immense hordes, thus miserably dependent upon charity, were cast upon the mercy of the new-found world. Poor and helpless though they may have been, those of us who count among our ancestors members of this desolate company, may remember that theirs was not the poverty of shiftless beggary. Thrifty land-owners they had been at home, driven by might but not by right from happy homes in beautiful hamlets along the Rhine. Like the Huguenots and the Pilgrims, like the Dutch in by-gone years, they were the victims of

religious persecution, living martyrs to the freedom of their faith.

For this hapless body of people, England was to find a home. Housed, clothed, and victualled until able to support themselves, they were to be settled on the banks of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, there to manufacture great stores of tar for the use of the English navy and the commerce of the world. Thus were they to repay the expense of which they had been the cause. Incidentally they were to serve as a much needed barrier against the Canadian French and their Indian allies.

The Palatines entered into a covenant with their English patrons to perform the above service. The covenant begins:

Whereas wee the underwritten Persons Natives of the Lower Palatinate of the Rhine have been subsisted, maintained and supported ever since our Arrival in this Kingdom. . . .

For this purpose they were presently removed from Nutten Island and settled at Livingston Manor, and Governor Hunter, November 14, 1710, proclaims that he has planted them in five villages "upon good lands on both sides of Hudson's Run about one hundred miles up, adjacent to the Pines" to be ready for work in the spring, but their hearts were not in the making of tar. They compared themselves to the Hebrews in the land of Egypt and they loved not the house of





The Klock House at St. Johnsville, 1750

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox



bondage in the Livingston Manor. They longed for "Schorie," the promised land. But that, said Governor Hunter, was not for them—for the present, at least. "For the present," they acquiesced.

Of the temper of the people we may judge from a remnant of conversation of a group of men seated around the fire of an evening.

Said one: "Here we have peace, but cannot earn our bread." Said another, "Earn our bread! We came to America to establish our families, to secure lands for our children on which they will be able to support themselves after we die, and that we cannot do here." As for the second purpose, they acceded cheerfully enough. They readily enlisted for military service and served when required. They were made of fighting stuff, as they afterward proved.

The truth is, the fugitives were no sooner located in Livingston Manor than the English forgot them. They did not send them to Schoharie, they did not supply the full quota of provisions,—they did not fulfil their part of the contract. The Palatines had no inspiration for their tasks. Later, when promised one half the proceeds, they were more contented. But, naturally, their needs incompletely supplied, the enterprise did not prosper. Governor Hunter, good man that he was, ruined himself to aid them, unrequited, so far as we can learn, by the British government. Ever loyal to the English, small

wonder that he became at last embittered against the "poor Palatines," who were not enthusiastic over his great designs, but replied ever to his lectures on their discontent that they would go to "Schorie." Documents still in existence speak eloquently of the troubles of the poor Palatines at this period and of Robert Livingston's efforts to provide for them.

That the Palatines were already doing their part in leadership against the French and Indians of Canada may be seen from the list of men enrolled in an expedition against Canada as early as 1711, also from the following bill:

ALBANY 15th august 1711

Received then of Johanis Ten Eyck Twenty one Thousand nine hundred and Twenty four pounds bread, sent with us by George Clark Esq' on her Maj<sup>ty</sup> account for yuis of the Land Forces in the present expeditions against Canada.

Wittness our hands it being as is mentioned in ye bill of Leading, but not weighed by us.

KIL<sup>N</sup> RENSELLAER.

Still the settlers at Livingston Manor were dissatisfied. Deep at the root of the failure of the enterprise lay a great mistake, simply this—the land was not fitted for the work. Two years—a long time for distressed colonists—were needed to prepare the trees for their designated use and in the end the trees were not of a kind adapted for that use. Such might have been better found



in the Southern States. So the undertaking failed at last, and the settlers were told that they might shift for themselves. Those unfitted for further adventure stayed their steps and made for themselves homes where best they might, the rest made straight for Schoharie. Here, through the winter, owing to the kind offices of the Indians, they found subsistence and in the spring sowed their seeds and enjoyed the beginnings of prosperity in the promised land, which, alas! was not yet theirs.

Although to Governor Hunter's inquiry why the colonists went to Schoharie, they sensibly replied that they were told to shift for themselves and had to go somewhere, he was not satisfied. He granted to other enterprising spirits patents of the land of the Schoharie, legal patents against which the grant of the Indians and the verbal promise of the Queen were of no avail. Stubbornly the German settlers clung to the soil, and to save themselves from starvation, planted and sowed,—until might once more prevailed over right and they were driven from their homes. A portion elected to remain in Schoharie. They rented the land which should have been theirs, and by industry and thrift became possessed of the wherewithal to buy and cultivate their own and, finally, to wrest victory from defeat.

In the race at large the spirit of liberty was too strong to be subdued. They would have their rights or nothing. To the generous, noble land

of William Penn many of them went and thither in after years their German countrymen in their migrations followed them, never again making port in the harbor of New York, with the exception of the ship of 1722, which brought among others *en route* for the Mohawk Valley, the family of the Herkimers.

Of all the Palatine settlers at Schoharie, one third turned their steps to the Mohawk Valley. There they received patents and were at rest.

General Burnet, in November, 1722, purchased from the Mohawk Indians land for the Palatines. He says in a letter to the Board of Trade dated October 16, 1721:

I did intend to settle the Palatines as far as I could in the middle of our Indians, but finding they could not be brought to that, I have granted their own request, which was to purchase of the nearest Indians, who are the Mohawks, which I had yielded them with the condition that it is not nearer than a fall in the Mohawk River which is forty miles above Fort Hunter and fourscore from Albany, by which the frontier will be so much extended and these people seem very well pleased and satisfied with what I have done and as a proof of it all that did live in a lawless manner before on the land at Schoharie, which had been granted to other proprietors have now actually taken leave from them and allotted tenants to them.

This land was situated on the Canada Creek and proved of value to the settlers because it



East Canada Creek

Photograph by Penny





secured for them the lesser carrying-place at the present Little Falls.

The patent called the Burnetsfield Patent was granted April 30, 1725, and the allotted farms ran back from the river in narrow strips, one hundred acres each—thirty acres near the river, seventy acres on the hills; two shillings sixpence annually was the rent before the patent was granted, —two years after the arrival of the patentees. The patent took in the lands on both sides of the river from Little Falls to Ganondagaron, the vicinity of the present village of Frankfort.

In the spring of 1723, the sturdy yeomen with their rude luggage ascended the river in bateaux cut from hollow trees, pushing aside the overhanging bushes, dragging their boats over the carrying-places, stopping in rude camps at night. Arrived, they cut the trees and reared their homes and waited for the straw to thatch them, till the harvesting of the still unplanted grain.

A similar patent to the above was given at Stone Arabia, October 19, 1723, comprising 12,700 acres. This was granted to the heads of twenty-seven Palatine families. Deeds were also given by Mohawk sachems, one of date July 9, 1722, at about which time there was some settlement in the vicinity of the present Palatine Church. From time to time, discontented dwellers from Schoharie added themselves to their brethren on the Mohawk, and the ship of 1722 from Holland also undoubtedly added its quota of Palatine

refugees, who found homes, sooner or later, in our beautiful valley.

In the hunting-grounds of the Mohawks and amid their Indian castles and the clearings of their Holland neighbors, the Palatines planted their churches, their schools, and their homes. Amid the Canajoharie and Schenectady of the Indians and the Amsterdam and Rotterdam of the Dutchmen, rose the Manheim and the Palatine Bridge and the Palatine Church of to-day.

This "stubborn and seditious people," stubborn like the Puritans, stubborn like the Huguenots, some of whose blood, no doubt, flowed in their veins, seditious as they showed themselves in the War of the Revolution, in the cause of right, were at least contented, industrious, God-fearing, and brave. It is pleasant to note that, much as the presence of the inflowing masses of Palatines was feared by many in our then new country, they and their descendants, as a body, have given no cause for dissatisfaction in the quarters where they have made their homes, but that of many of them have been uttered words not dissimilar to those once used by Macaulay.

Honest, laborious men, who had once been thrifty burghers of Manheim and Heidelberg,—and who had cultivated the vine on the banks of the Neckar and the Rhine. Their ingenuity and their diligence could not fail to enrich any land which should afford them an asylum.

Says Sanford H. Cobb, in his *Story of the Palatines*:<sup>1</sup>

As to the permanent influence of this Palatine immigration, it goes without saying that it was impossible for such sturdiness of stock, such patient and firm persistence in the right, such capacity for endurance, and such buoyancy of hope, conjoined with such addiction to religion, to be absorbed into American life without a deep impress on the character of after generations.

At peace with the red man, they lived among their neighbors, the Dutch, whose large infusion of Huguenot is also attested by the French character of many old Dutch names. A slight antagonism existed, but in time it wore away. Intermarriages took place, and the *two* stubborn, seditious peoples became one people, as they worshipped one God, and were known thenceforward as the "Mohawk Dutch."

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1897, by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

## CHAPTER IV

### IN THE DAYS OF SIR WILLIAM—OUT-OF-DOOR LIFE

THE Mohawk Valley was still the "Maquas' land." Schenectady was the "place outside the door"; Ga-ha-oose (Cohoes), "the shipwrecked canoe"; Ga-na-wa-da (Fonda), "over the rapids"; Ta-la-que-ga (Little Falls), "small bushes." Herkimer was Te-uge-ga; Utica, Nun-da-da-sis (going around the hill); Ole-hish was the "place of nettles," and the portage at Rome was De-o-waim-sta, "place where boats are carried from one stream to another." The beaver dwelt in the grassy meadows and deer and antelope roamed the hills.

The Mohawk River flowed broader and deeper in those early days. Unhewn forests protected its glassy surface from the beating sun. On the flat lands along the shore, for miles and miles, grew stretches of the Indian corn, of squashes, melons, and beans, and among them the patient squaw might often be seen at her task. The red fisherman, with his bone fish-hooks, stood upon its banks or shot across its surface in his birch-bark canoe. His wild cry still rang through the



ancient forests and the flying arrow still brought down the bounding deer. But among the ancient castles stood, here and there, a white man's home; strange new figures strayed at will through the virgin forests and unfamiliar water craft glided noiselessly by.

The white men of the valley numbered about fifteen hundred souls. The largest settlements then in existence were Schenectady, established by the Dutch; Fort Hunter, an English mission colony, and Canajoharie and German Flats, settled by the Palatines. Smaller villages were Crane's Village, German Flats, and Burnet's Field. Near all these settlements were Indian lodges, but the Indians still possessed larger villages more remote.

Schenectady, once burned, had been rebuilt, and now stood, a taut little village, with a newly erected stone church, boasting a Holland-made bell. In fur trade it was still a rival of Albany, though the palmiest days of the fur trade were past. The *bouwlandts* yielded abundant harvest, and throughout the year the making of wampum had become a lucrative trade. Newly formed hamlets nearer the sources of the Mohawk had much traffic here as with a newer Albany. Many families derived support from the wampum manufacture—a woman's work for one day varying from five to ten strings.

The establishment of Fort Brewerton gave substantial aid to the finances of the early German

settlers in the vicinity of Fort Herkimer. A contract for supplies at the Fort was early awarded to Johan Jost Herkimer. In September, 1728, the records show:

To John Jost Herkimer in full of two accounts for riding goods amounting to twenty-three pounds, five shillings and six pence, the sum of seventeen pounds, eleven shillings.

At Fort Brewerton, the Indians were wont to meet in May and thither the canoes of the white settlers wended their way, to trade with the Five Nations in peace.

In 1737, a similar contract was awarded to Henry Van Rensselaer, Jr., John Jost Herkimer, and Harmanus Wendell, the supplies stipulated for including many bushels of wheat, meal, pease, Indian corn, pounds of beef, sugar, and candles—not forgetting 104 gallons of rum,—also for Schenectady, brown biscuits, pease, pork, and rum. The latter supplies were intended for the sustenance of the returning troops as they stopped at that point and for the twenty-five men, with their physician, *en route* to their relief. It was in the bargain that the doctor and soldiers were to be furnished with bateaux enough to transport themselves and baggage. Indian helpers assisted in driving cattle and all service and supplies were well recompensed for 456 pounds!

The neighbors of the large contractors found

market for their produce in eking out the latter's supplies, and heightened prosperity resulted.

The earliest water transportation was by canoe; but, about 1737, bateaux began to take their place. Three or four handed (propelled by three or four men), they carried loads of provisions or cargoes of Indian wares. Where rapids were encountered or at the small rifts along the river the boatmen used large poles to force these boats upward, while rope pulling by others on shore served to complete the task. When, as at Little Falls, this feat was impossible, ox-wagons, with narrow-rimmed wheels were used to transport the merchandise, boats and all. The poles used are described as eighteen to twenty feet in length with a large knob at the upper end to support the weight of the hand and tipped, each, with a sharp iron provided with a twenty-pound socket. These poles were early on sale at convenient places along the shore and the transportation of boats around the carrying places gave further employment to burghers of the present Herkimer.

At this time, also, quaint old ferry-boats (scows propelled by poles) crossed the river at wide, travelled points for the transportation of horses and vehicles. Still, for ordinary purposes, the white man used the canoe, and the red man, with fleets of them, dropped down the river in the trading season.

In those days the sturdy native stalked in dignity along the beaten paths of his fathers carrying



to Albany his burden of beaver skins. The trail was clearly marked by the footprints of generations of the sons of the forest. Even the hard rocks on its course were worn smooth by attrition; and totem signs still made picturesquely wild the trees along the path. On a journey he would take maize and a kettle, wooden bowl and spoon packed and hung on his back. At Albany, near the north gate and inside a wall of stockades, he undid his pack. Away back to 1691 may be traced this trade with the Dutch, to those days when, *Dominie Magapolensis* tells us, turkeys and deer came to the houses for food, so abundant were they, and could be bought of the natives for a "loaf of bread, a knife, or even a tobacco pipe." A beaver skin was worth \$1.00 per pound and that of an average otter, entire, about \$6.00. The only money in use, save a very occasional coin, was wampum. Four guilders, among the Dutch, 165½ c., was the equivalent of one string of wampum one fathom long. A string about one foot in length was worth 12½ c.

Barter, for the most part, prevailed. Skins of the beaver and otter, Indian brooms, venison, ginseng, and medicinal roots,—these the red man offered in exchange.

Near Albany, and Schenectady, too, his little villages were to be found and, wandering forth from these, he offered for sale belts of wampum, finely carved wooden dishes, ladles, spoons, trays, splint brooms and basket work, and beautiful



bits of embroidery and deerskin in moccasins and garters.

The autumn-tide served for his fishing days and times of peace. It was then that his council fires made blue the air with the Indian summer haze. It was then that he wove his baskets of twigs and fashioned his pottery of clay and his arrowheads of flint.

Winter and spring were the trapping seasons. In June, July, and August he brought his goods over trail and river for sale. These three months were "handel-tyde" and then at Schenectady fleets of Indian canoes brightened the placid waters.

To intercept the native or to visit the Indian villages for trade, the Dutch *bos-loper* followed the same beaten paths, his little pack-horse trudging on land, or his canoe skimming the waters of the Mohawk, loaded for trade, with strouds, duffels and trinkets, powder, guns, beads, and rum.

When the Albany lad became a youth he one day asked his father for a little money, a canoe, and a negro slave. At about the same time he learned to smoke, by way of protection against the insects with which the forests abounded. His faithful slave at his side, he performed the journey to Canada, with no other provisions than a little corn-meal or dried beef, depending upon his trusty rifle for abundant supplies of game.

No less striking a figure, along the same trail,

was the "Black Gown," as the Indians called him, —the Jesuit, in his close-fitting black robe and cassock, coming first as prisoner or danger-enveloped emissary from the Canadian French, in later days as more acceptable missionary of the cross, ready in early days or late to endure hardship, privation, martyrdom—death—if so be he might by any means snatch a soul as a brand from the burning by the baptismal drop openly or surreptitiously applied to the forehead of the pestilence-stricken Mohawk warrior, the dying papoose or the tortured prisoner writhing in the flames.

Along the old Indian trails, too, roamed the burly hunter in search of game, or the picturesque trapper in fur cap, round coat, a belt from which hung his bullet-pouch and under which were fastened, on the left, his knife and hatchet. A powder-horn hung suspended from his right arm; a bundle of steel traps dangled from his left.

Thus arrayed, he set his traps for the unsuspecting beavers, whose skins he finally transported by means of a patient little pack-horse to the waiting canoe. Skilled in forest lore was the trapper. Ready with rifle and fish-hook must he be, ready at kindling with flint the fire on which were cooked with his own horny hands the savory meals of venison steaks and forest trout; and a dog of tried ability and unfailing skill was usually his inseparable friend.

Upon the back of the trapper was strapped a

pack containing, possibly, more traps, a few simple cooking utensils and a little Indian meal and salt. When he reached a stopping place in his journey he set up two crotched sticks, covering them with poles and boughs and forming himself a temporary shelter from the weather, the insects, and the beasts.

Apropos of all this, we learn from Mr. Kalm, a writer of the period that there were "gnats between Albany and Canada" and that faces smeared with grease, caps over foreheads and gauze before eyes and papers wrapped under stockings, with fires at entrance of tents, were some of the means employed to ward off the forest foes. The trapper was prepared, if need be, to cut his way through unbroken woods, endure the stings of insects, kindle fires to ward off the attacks of wolves, to ascertain the proximity of water by the nature of the growing plants and, in the absence of compass and the unclouded sun, to tell by the want of moss on one side of the tree which was the north. It was needful that he be as well versed in human nature as in the geography of the Indian villages, the state of the currents, the winds, and the markets.

Well laden with cargo, he returned to offer at the marts of Albany and Schenectady the same order of goods, namely, furs, that the Indians had brought in canoe fleets from Oneida Lake and with which the Dutch *bos-lopers* came laden from the up-country trade.

In those days the Dutch and British sold to the inland Indians for wampum many trinkets and they bartered these for furs. Of the Indian was still true what was said of him by Mr. Van Shaick in 1696.

The goods which the Indians put the highest value and esteem upon are sleighs, Liege guns, powder, lead, strouds, red and blew blankets, duffels, woolen stockings, red, blew and white, and small brass kettles.

Such goods as these the Dutch traders carried into the interior besides such attractive trifles as knives, looking-glasses, pipes, keys, axes, buckles, chains, bracelets, and similar articles of utility or ornament.

John Kast is known to have opened trade with the Indians at Oswego as early as 1720. The houses of these earliest traders were built after the Indian style.

It was in 1738 that a young Irishman ascended the Hudson, stopped for a night at Schenectady, made exit through its northern gate, pushed his way through the "Woestine," ever northward, to find his goal in the Mohawk Valley, in the vicinity of the present Amsterdam. In him we recognize the face and figure of Sir William Johnson, a man destined to bear an important part in making the history of the valley.

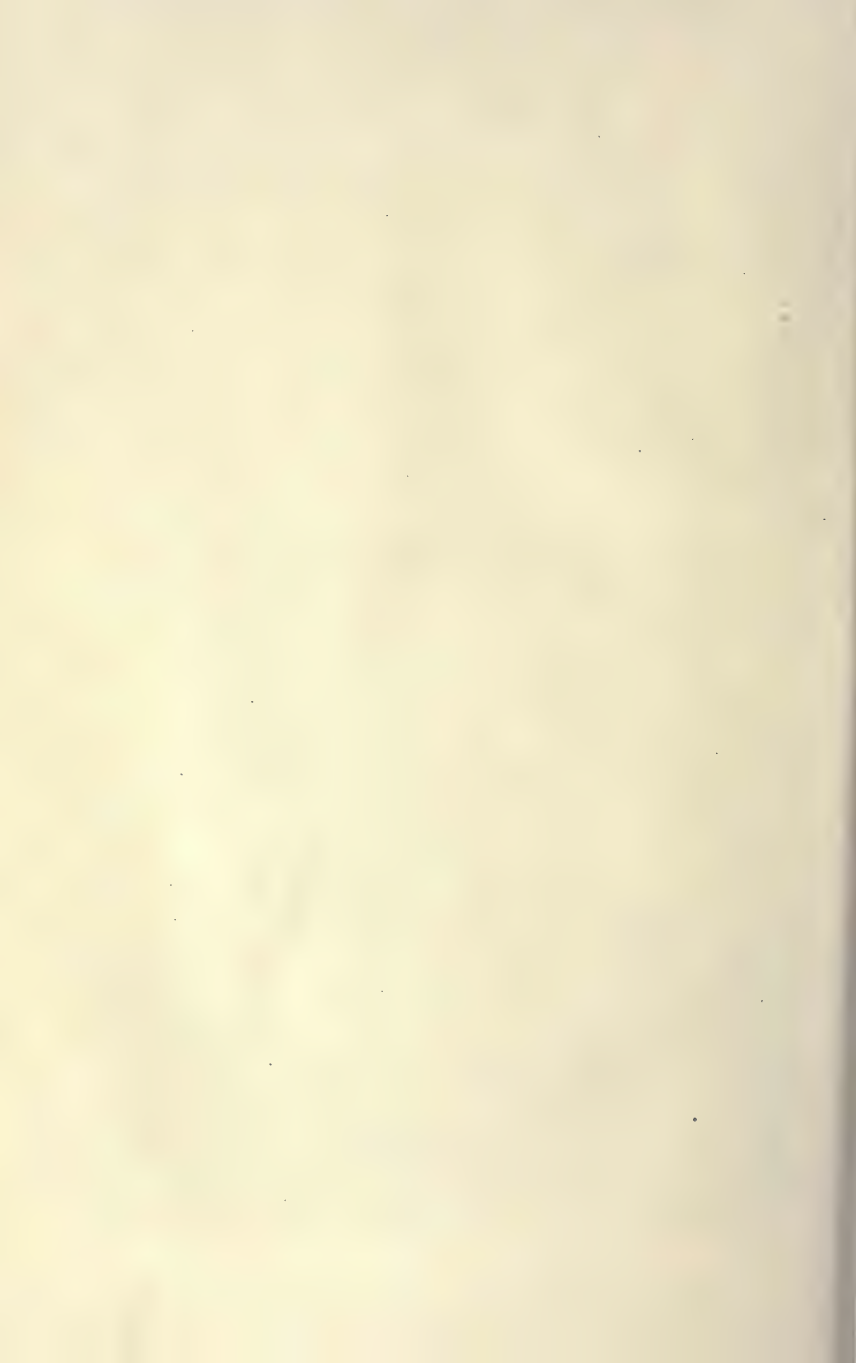
A poor boy, disappointed in love, he sought this country, an agent entrusted with the property of





Statue of Sir William Johnson

Photograph by Eaton



his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, upon the Mohawk River. Near Amsterdam he built a home under whose roof was included a store, and took as companion, later as wife, Catharine Weisenberg. Within three years thereafter he built the grand and gloomy building afterwards known as Fort Johnson, of the present Akin, and near it he erected a grist-mill.

Here Sir William was wont to welcome his dark-hued brethren and to preside over them at the athletic games of which he was so fond. It was here that he brought Catharine Weisenberg, to be succeeded soon by Caroline, King Hendrick's niece, mother of his two daughters and of the half-breed William. After her death he sought the hand of Molly Brant, who had first attracted his attention when, sixteen years of age, she had sprung upon the back of an officer's steed and cantered, thus seated behind him, wildly round, her eyes dancing with excitement and her dark hair streaming in the wind.

The grim, gray building of to-day is impressive amid its dark surroundings of trees, as it stands near the present railway station of the little village of Akin,—on the banks of the rocky Chuctenunda, its spacious halls and small panel windows still the same. There are two wide rooms in front, narrow ones in the rear, and the attic with its dormer windows looks down upon us, a quaint reminder of the past.

"Mount" Johnson until 1735, the gloomy

structure was palisaded in 1755, and known as "Fort Johnson" thereafter. In 1742 was erected a grist-mill. In 1745, Sir William, having sold off in great lots much of his uncle's estate, was made commissioner of Indian affairs. Great became his supremacy with the red man. Possessed of that rare courtesy and tact which made at home the baron or the peasant, he brought to bear his great natural social powers upon the simple life of the son of the forest. About this time, he was adopted into the tribe and became known as Warragh-i-ya-gey. He was their equal in bravery and endurance, their peer in prowess, their leader in battle, their arbiter in dispute, their comrade at games. Using their native tongue he made one at their councils, adorned with war-paint, a great war-bonnet, and a scarlet blanket embroidered in gold. In integrity he was unswerving; in hospitality, boundless, and he held the Iroquois nations in leash.

There is in existence a bill of sale of Sir William's day showing that Nicholas Herkimer, Esq., bought of John Heughan of Schenectady, on May 26, 1774, "eight yards Superfine black Serge, seven yards of Shalloon, one yard of Buckram one half dozen sheath headed Buttons, two dozen small do., four scanes of silk and two Sticks of Silk Twist."

At Albany and Schenectady, the burghers in general made purchase of such produce as their own well stocked farms and thrifty vrouws did



not provide. For the convenience, however, of the casual buyer—particularly of the *bos-loper*, the Indian and the trapper—there was established the country store, whose staple consisted of rum, molasses, the common groceries and drugs, “ankers” (gallon kegs) of brandy, clothing, hats, shoes, strouds (blankets), duffels (coarse cloth), axes, guns, powder, knives, kettles, pans, steel traps, horns, snow-sledges, fish-hooks and lines, pipes, beads, and other knickknacks for the Indian trade.

There was little of display. Jars and dry goods upon the shelves,—bins, boxes, and barrels upon the floor. Such a store as this Lady Johnson herself did not disdain to keep.

Of the dealings of the red man with the white we have interesting evidence in the account of Jelles Fonda, said to have been the first merchant west of Schenectady who, during the days of Sir William, established a prosperous store and who numbered among his customers “Young Baron of the Hill,” “Wide Mouth Jacob,” “Young Moses,” “Snuffers David,” and the “Squinty Cayuga,” who left in pledge their silver ornaments, such as arm-bands and “draw-bands” for the hair. They bought fire-water and stockings, blankets and hats, knives, looking-glasses, gilt cups and laces, and all that they bought they paid for in the end. The accounts were often settled in ginseng at three cents per pound. Before this store the red man stood entranced as

he listened to the chiming of the musical clock within.

Mr. Fonda had agents at Fort Stanwix, Oswego, and Niagara and there they bought directly from the Indians, furs, which were afterward sold in quantities in London.

We append an interesting bill from Mr. Fonda's accounts:

YOUNG MOSES, DR.

1762

| Sept. 20                    | £ | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------|---|----|----|
| To one French blanket       | 0 | 16 | 0  |
| “ “ small “                 | 0 | 12 | 0  |
| “ 4 Ells White linnen       | 0 | 8  | 0  |
| “ 1 pair Indian stockings   | 0 | 6  | 0  |
| “ 1 hat                     | 0 | 8  | 0  |
| “ 1 pt. of rum and one dram | 0 | 1  | 4  |
| “ 1 qt. rum                 | 0 | 2  | 0  |

I leave in pledge two silver wrist-bands.

By the year 1760, there were settled at Fort Stanwix five white families, and the heads of two of these, Mr. Brodock and Mr. Roof, are known to have been engaged in the Indian trade for fur.

Some of Mr. Roof's bills of sale are still preserved. He was prosperous in his business, having customers as far east as even Stone Arabia and Caughnawaga. He often furnished supplies for the fort, but the fortune of war caused his removal just previous to the battle of Oriskany.

He afterwards became the founder of Canajoharie village.

About 1764 the settlement of New Petersburg, a hamlet of more than thirty log-houses on the site of the present East Schuyler, was begun by one Hasenclever, who started it with German emigrants whom he employed in running a potash factory, shipping the potash down the Mohawk in flat-bottomed boats and bringing back other produce in return. Under the same management, Mr. John Wolff kept a store, and the scales, then in use, dated 1764, are preserved to this day by his descendants.

There exists an order of J. Wolff written in German which, translated, reads:

Mr. George Dachsteter, give, on the presentation of this to Peter Moulder and George Cronhard one whole freight of corn for the account of Mr. Peter Hasenclever, of New York, for which Mr. George Herckheimer will guarantee the payment of 5s. per skipple, to the amount of £6 5s.

Dated Petersburg, the 25th February, 1768.

(Signed) J. WOLFF.

(Good for 25 Skipples of corn, at £6 5s.)

The first store in Minden was kept by William Seeber about 1750. Conrad Gansevoort erected a dwelling-house, including a store, at the foot of Sand Hill and the Oothout brothers built about the same time a store which was fifty feet

long and two stories high. There was a dwelling on one end.

John Hugh Heughan of Schenectady advertised, in 1772, "Scotch Snuff, Tobacco, Bibles, Testaments, Spelling-Books, Knives & Forks, Writing Paper, Ink, Powder, Quills, Razors, &c."; while James Van Horne, whose trading place was located near the present canal locks at Fort Herkimer has preserved accounts, from which we quote:

1775 May 15 to Cash paid Dr. Jacob Petrie for 1 Glass of Bolsom Damalts and Bleeding.

Against DUNCAN McDOUGAL—

1775 Dec. 14 to 1 otter skin 24s.; 3 martin skins 9s.

Among items charged to various persons are also mentioned sundry "nips of grog."

Isaac Paris, an Alsatian, came to this country about 1737 and settled at Stone Arabia. Here he kept a large country store which was afterward stockaded and known during the Revolution as *Fort Paris*. One of Mr. Paris's advertisements has been preserved and is believed to date back to about 1770.

Just imported from London and to be sold by the subscriber, Isaac Paris, at his house in Stone Arabia—a large Assortment of European Goods, viz.; Black and Blue Persian; Silk Damascas, Silk Venetian Poplin; Fine Cloth and Blue Sagathy; Chints; Printed



Cotton; French Cambric; French Clear Lawn; British Sheeting; Russia Sheeting; German Ozuaburg; Black Callimanco; Black Silk fringed Handkerchiefs; Men's & Women's 3 thd. white Thread Stockings; Men's brown ditto; Men's Cotton Stockings; Men's Random Thread Stockings; Black ripp'd Worsted hose; Black and figured Ribbons; Tea Kettles; Men's and Women's Buckles; Pistol Cap'd Knives; Castorbatts; powder; Shot of various sort; Horn-combs; Ivory combs; Writing paper—Also, New York Rum; Loaf and Muscovadoe Sugar; and likewise a Large Assortment of pewter work and French Blankets with Sundry Articles too tedious to enumerate, Which he will sell by Wholesale or Retail, on very cheap and the lowest terms, in cash, or (if required) for credit, or any merchantable Country produce.

ISAAC PARIS.

Johan Jost Petry was one of the large contractors of the day, as witness the following certificate:

FORT OSWEGO 24th April 1752

I do hereby Certify that I have received from Mr. Johan Petry Contractor for victualling this Garrison Four Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty Six pounds of Beef, Seventy Eight Bushells of Wheat Meal, Fifty Eight Bushells and a half of Pease Nineteen Bushells and a half Indian Corn Fifty-two Gallons of Rum, Fifty-two pounds weight of Sugar and Fifty two pounds weight of Candles, for the half year Commencing the first of November last and ending the Thirty-1st Instant.

JOHN NULTER.

Mr. Petrie's papers contain many interesting items in regard to these contracts, for example, of date May 16, 1775:

To ten men making road at the carrying-place, each three days, is thirty days, at 5s. a day £20-00

June 9—To six horses which I bought for 48 10

July 27—To 96 skipples peas sent to Oswego, all charges, 44-05

Oct. 28—To 45 skipples flour delivered to Captain Williams 9-00

Sir William himself was a trader. His furs found sale in London, while his Mohawk Valley flour was exported as far north as Nova Scotia and as far south as the West Indies.

But colonial days in the Mohawk Valley were destined to be other than days of peace. The wars between English and French, Mohawk and Adirondack had resulted in such massacres as that at Schenectady in 1790. The old French War of 1744 gave rise to renewed slaughter. The French pursued the policy of petty raids. November 17, 1745, Saratoga was given to the torch.

On the 26th of November, the same year, Mr. James Wilson of Albany, imbued with fears for the safety of his friend, wrote a letter to the baronet, from which we make an extract.

Mother desires you to come down and live here this winter, until these troublesome times are a little over. They have kept a room on purpose for you, and they

beg that you will send down the best of your things directly. There is room enough for your servants if you will bring them down. I would not have you stay at your own house, for the French have told our Indians that they will have you dead or alive, because you are a relation of Captain Warren, their great adversary. Therefore, I beg you will not be too resolute and stay. If you will not come yourself I beg you will send your books and papers, and the best of your things.

Another extract from a letter of the day gives a vivid picture of the war methods of the Iroquois and of Sir William's manner of dealing with them.

*Colonel Johnson to Governor Clinton.*

MOUNT JOHNSON, May 30, 1747.

May it please your Excellency:

You cannot conceive the uneasiness your long silence gives me—not having had the honor of a line from you since the thirtieth of April. It is now the first time that I have wanted money for scalps and provisions and instructions most of all. The numbers about me every day going to war takes abundance of arms, ammunition and clothing, and I am quite bare of most of those things. Your excellency will conceive that what I have received is but a mere trifle, with so many as I have to distribute it among, although so sparingly done; and were it not for my own store and what goods I have been obliged to buy, I should have been obliged to drop the affair some time ago, which would have been very hard after all

my trouble to bring them so heartily into our interest. I am quite pestered every day with parties returning with prisoners and scalps, and without a penny to pay them with, it comes very hard upon me, and is displeasing to them, I can assure you, for they expect their pay, and demand it of me as soon as they return.

. . . . .

There is nothing more requisite at present than some blue camlet, red shalloon, good lace and white metal buttons to make up a parcel of coats for some chief warriors from the Senecas, and for others who are daily expected. Wherefore I wish your excellency would send me up these things by the first opportunity and also about thirty good castor hats, with scallop lace for them all, white lace if to be had, if not, some yellow with it. This I assure your excellency goes a great way with them.

Just as I was finishing my letter arrived another party of mine, consisting of only six Mohawks, who brought with them seven prisoners and three scalps, which is very great for so small a party. I have my house now all full of the Five Nations—some going out to-morrow against the French. Others go for news, which, when furnished, I shall let your excellency know. My “peoples” success is now the talk of the whole country. I expect in a short time several more parties home from Canada. I believe Hendrick will be the first, who, I dare say, will bring a great many with him, dead or alive.—So that we shall need a great deal among them all. They have brought in this spring as follows:



|   |   |
|---|---|
| First by Lieut. Walter Butler and his party,  |   |
| from Crown Point, the scalps of men,          | 6 |
| By Lieut. Thomas Butler and party, prisoners, | 8 |
| By a Canajoharie party, prisoners,            | 7 |
| Scalps,                                       | 2 |
| By Gingegoe and party, prisoners,             | 7 |
| Scalps,                                       | 3 |

. . . . .

*Extract from Colonel Johnson to Governor Clinton.*

MT. JOHNSON, Aug. 13, 1747.

There is one thing which I wish your excellency to consider of, which is my extraordinary expense in keeping several hands employed to attend the numbers of Indians I have daily had at my house these twelve months past, as also of a clerk, who, with myself, has more work than men can well bear.

But a few weeks earlier than the above date, the neighborhood of Schenectady had again experienced suffering.

About three miles west of that ancient town is a depression in the land known as Beukendaal. In the year 1747, in the month of July, two Schenectady yeomen, Messrs. Toll and Van Vorst, with one Ryckert, a servant of the former, visited the spot in search of some horses they had lost. Thinking they heard the sound of hoofs they incautiously advanced to find themselves in the presence of Indians playing at quoits. Mr. Toll received their fire and was killed. Mr. Van Vorst

was captured. Ryckert escaped. The firing had been heard, the slave confirmed the news, and the *klokluyer*, Widow Margarita Veeder, gave the alarm by the ringing of the church bell.

A company of New England militia was stationed at Schenectady at the time. With a few of the villagers, they marched, seventy men in all, to the spot. But they had been duped by Indian cunning. Seeing a crow flying up and down about the body of a seated man, they advanced in surprise, only in their turn to receive destructive fire from Indian rifles. The crow was tied with a string and the supposedly living man was but the dead body of Mr. Toll.

In this engagement many were wounded, thirteen or fourteen taken prisoners, and twenty killed. The remainder took their flight to the deserted De Graaf house, where they succeeded in barricading themselves until Colonel Jacob Glen led a Schenectady regiment to their relief, when their antagonists fled. Meanwhile, Mr. Van Vorst, who had been left tied to a tree, had succeeded in reaching his knife, cutting the strings and making good his escape. The dead bodies were carried tenderly to the barn of Abraham Mabie and laid there on the floor.

Bands of savages now prowled about the valley. Petty raids were frequent, suffering and danger enveloped the troubled frontier. Ammunition was kept ready at hand; all men were under arms. Forts were put in repair, homes and churches were

palisaded for defence, and sentries were posted on neighboring hills. Despite all these precautions, many a life was swiftly and cruelly taken, many a sorrowful captive was borne away to Canada, and many a fresh-cut scalp adorned the belt of the warrior from the north.

About the year 1746, in which year Sir William was appointed by Governor Clinton colonel of the warriors of the Six Nations, great restlessness prevailed among the red men. War existed between England and France and the Iroquois vacillated beneath the compelling influence of the nations at arms. This restlessness and vacillation greatly increased, when, in 1750, Sir William resigned from his position, under sway of certain intrigues prevailing at Albany.

In 1753, there was a general call for the services of Johnson to pacify the Indians. In that year they met him at Fort Johnson and difficulties were arranged. In 1755, April 16, he was appointed by General Braddock sole superintendent of Indian affairs. But the troubled frontier was not yet at peace. A vivid picture of the times is presented in a letter to Sir William from Oswego, bearing date August 9, 1754, and beginning thus:

SIR—I embrace this opportunity of Reporting to your Honour that this Day past this Fort bound towards Canada Seventeen Canoes with seven French Colours Hoist as also two English Colours Yelping the Death Hollow from the time of their appearing in sight till they came almost opposite the Fort and

then ceased and after they had past a little distance  
Fired Five or Six Guns one at a time.

The year 1755 marked the beginning of the "Last French War." September 8, 1755, the battle of Lake George took place—a conflict between the American army, in all three thousand strong, and the French army of about five hundred more. The French force was under command of Baron Dieskau; the American army, largely composed of New England men, with some New-Yorkers, was led by General Lyman and Gen. William Johnson, the latter having under his control four hundred Iroquois who were not in favor with the New England men. The signal victory gained by the colonists at this time secured for General Johnson the title "Baronet," which he thereafter bore, receiving at the same time a gift from Parliament of five thousand pounds.

In the Baron's army likewise were some few of the "praying Indians," Mohawk converts who had moved to Canada.

As the Baron wrote in a letter of September 15th:

Our affair was well begun but as soon as the Iroquois perceived some Mohawks, they came to a dead halt. . . .

The Regulars received the whole of the enemy's fire and were almost cut to pieces. I prophesied to you Sir that the Iroquois would play some scurvy



trick,—it is unfortunate that I am such a good prophet.

Said Johnson, in his official report of the same event, "The Schenectady officers and men fought like lions."

During the year 1755 there was built by the English, probably between June and October, the star-shaped work, Fort Bull, named after its commander, Lieutenant Bull. In the same year, Fort Williams, likewise named after its commander, Captain Williams, was built on the Mohawk not far from the present Rome.

On the 7th of March, 1756, M. DeLery, after long resistance, battered down the gate of Fort Bull and put its garrison to the sword. The fort, which was liberally stocked with provisions and clothing, was pillaged and committed to the flames.

The erection of Fort Newport, a little work which was never finished, was begun during the same year. It stood about half-way between Forts Williams and Bull. Fort Craven was completed about the same time by Major Charles Craven. In August, all three—Forts Williams, Newport, and Craven—were destroyed by order of General Webb.

The old stone church of Fort Herkimer, together with the substantial stone residence of Johan Jost Herkimer and other buildings, was stockaded in the spring of 1756 by order of Sir William Johnson. This fortification was known by the French as Fort Kouari.

The mansion of the patriarch Herkimer was forty feet in width and seventy feet long, with two stories and a basement. It was grand for the times and picturesque, with its six port-holes, its broad basement windows through which a team might drive, its spacious hallway through the centre, its broad oaken staircase, and its deep fireplaces on each floor.

During the fall of 1757 rumors were rife of an attack upon German Flats. The inhabitants themselves were warned by friendly Oneidas. Sir William Johnson urged the English officers at Albany to send reinforcements to the threatened district.

But warnings were in vain. On the morning of November 12, 1757, the "Palatine's Village," German Flats, (the present Herkimer), was attacked by M. de Belletre with an army of Canadians, marines, and Indians, and one hundred people were carried captive to Canada. Some were slain. The little village was situated nearly opposite the old fort. In this were gathered the people from the south side of the river, and to this fort fled in safety the Rev. Mr. Rosencrantz, at that time pastor of the churches on both sides, with one hundred of his flock from the north side of the river. The fort, which now contained two hundred people and a garrison of one hundred and fifty soldiers, was not attacked. All property was either destroyed or carried away.

The amount of spoil taken by M. de Belletre

at this time was, according to his own report, very great. The report was no doubt exaggerated, but the people were thrifty and had accumulated some degree of wealth.

Johan Jost Petrie, the mayor of the town, was one of the unfortunate captives and is said to have been compelled, during his exile, to wear a cap with bells and tassels and perform dances at the pleasure of his savage captors.

On April 30th, of the year following, an attack was made on the south side of the river by a party of eighty Indians and four Frenchmen, who killed thirty-three people. Captain Herkimer, with a company of rangers, came to the rescue and drove off the enemy.

Advancing eastwardly along the Mohawk River, we find standing at this time three other forts which are described, after the French version, very entertainingly in the "Brodhead Papers."

Fort Canajoharie, the Upper Mohawk Castle, also on the south side of the river, consists of a square of four bastions of upright pickets joined with lintels fifteen feet high and about one foot square, with port-holes, and a stage all around to fire from. The fort was one hundred paces on each side, had small cannon in its bastions, and houses to serve as a store and barrack. Five or six families of Mohawks resided outside the pickets. From Fort Canajoharie to Fort Hunter—Lower Mohawk Castle—is about twelve leagues, with a good carriage road along the bank of the river.

Fort Hunter, situated on the borders of the "Moack" river, on the south side, in the estuary at the junction of the Schoharie creek with the Mohawk, and known by the Indians as Tienonderoga, is of the same form as that of Canajoharie, except that it is twice as large. It likewise has a house at each corner. The cannon at each bastion are seven and nine pounders. The pickets of this fort are higher than those at Canajoharie. There is a church or temple in the middle of the fort, while in its inclosure are also some thirty cabins of Mohawk Indians, which is their most considerable village. This fort, like that of Canajoharie, has no ditch and has a large swing-gate at the entrance. There are some houses outside, though under the protection of the fort, in which the country people seek shelter when an Indian or French war party is looked for.

Chenectedi, or Corlaer, situated on the south side of the Mohawk, is a village of about three hundred inhabitants. It is surrounded by upright pickets flanked from distance to distance. Entering by the gate on the Fort Hunter side—west side—there is a fort to the right which forms a kind of citadel in the interior of the village itself. It is a square flanked with four demi-bastions constructed half of masonry and half of timbers, and is capable of holding two or three hundred men. Several pieces of cannon are mounted on the ramparts. It is not encircled by a ditch; the entrance is through a large swing-gate which lifts up like a drawbridge. By penetrating the village from another point the fire from the fort can be avoided. The most of the inhabitants are Dutch.

Returning to Fort Johnson, we have this account:



Col. Johnson's Mansion is situated on the border of the left bank of the River Moack: it is three stories high (two with an attic) built of stone, with port-holes and a parapet, and flanked with four bastions on which are some small guns. In the same yard, on both sides of the mansion are two small houses; that on the right of the entrance is a store, and that on the left is designed for workmen negroes and other domestics. The yard gate is a heavy swing-gate well ironed; it is on the Moack river side; from this gate to the river is about two hundred paces of level ground. The high road passes there. A small rivulet, coming from the north, empties into the Moack river, about two hundred paces below the inclosure of the yard.\* On this stream is a mill about fifty paces distance from the house; below the mill is the miller's house, where grain and flour are stored, and on the other side of the creek, one hundred paces from the mill, is a barn in which cattle and fodder are kept. One hundred and fifty paces from Col. Johnson's mansion at the north side, on the left bank of the little creek, is a rise of ground on which is a small house with port-holes where, ordinarily, is kept a guard of honor of some twenty men, which serves also as an advanced post.

On the 23d day of July, 1758, at the present city of Rome, Brigadier-General John Stanwix began the construction of the fort which was named after him and which was destined to play so important a part in the annals of the Revolutionary War. After the death of the builder, who was drowned in the Irish Channel

before the Revolution, some attempt was made to change the name to Fort Schuyler. We find, thereafter, something of confusion in the title. But the old name had already become historic and it clung to the site. It was as Fort Stanwix that it gained the glory with which it was to be enveloped in the days of '77.

Wolves, bison, and elk existed in the valley then. A charming writer, Mrs. Grant, gives us a pen picture of the wild life as it existed then, when, as a child, daughter of a British officer making his way from Albany to Oswego, she passed through it in 1759. She says:

We travelled from one fort to another,—but in three or four instances, to my great joy, they were so remote from each other we found it necessary to encamp at night on the bank of the river. This is a land of profound solitude, where wolves, foxes and bears abounded and were much inclined to consider and treat us as intruders. It might seem dismal to wiser folks. But I was so gratified by the bustle and agitation produced by our measures of defence and actuated by that love which all children have of mischief that is not fatal, that I enjoyed our night's encampment exceedingly. We stopped early whenever we saw the largest and most combustible kind of trees. Cedars were great favorites and the first work was to fell and pile upon each other an incredible number stretched lengthways; while every one who could was busied in gathering withered branches of pine, &c., to fill up the interstices of the pile and make

the green wood burn the faster. Then a train of gun-powder was laid along to give fire to the whole fabric at once, which blazed and crackled magnificently. Then the tents were erected close in a row before this grand conflagration. This was not merely meant to keep us warm, though the nights did begin to grow cold, but to frighten wild beasts and wandering Indians. In case any such, belonging to hostile tribes, should see this prodigious blaze, the size of it was meant to give an idea of a greater force than we possessed.

In one place, where we were surrounded by hills, with swamps lying between them, there seemed to be a general congress of wolves which answered each other from opposite hills in sounds the most terrific. Probably the terror which all savage animals have at fire was exalted into fury by seeing so many enemies whom they dare not attack. The bull-frogs, those harmless though hideous inhabitants of the swamps, seemed determined not to be outdone, and roared a tremendous bass to this bravura accompaniment. This was almost too much for my love of the terrible sublime: some women, who were our fellow-travellers, shrieked with terror; and finally, the horrors of the night were ever after held in awful remembrance by all who shared them.

This journey, charming my romantic imagination by its very delays and difficulties, was such a source of interest and novelty to me that above all things I dreaded its conclusion, which I well knew would be succeeded by long tasks and close confinement. Happily for me, we soon entered upon Wood Creek, the most desirable of all places for a traveller who loves to linger, if such another traveller there be.

This is a small river, which winds irregularly through a deep and narrow valley of the most lavish fertility. The depth and richness of the soil here were evinced by the loftiness and the nature of the trees which were hickory, butternut, chestnut and sycamores of vast circumference as well as height. These became so top-heavy, and their roots were so often undermined by this insidious stream, that in every tempestuous night some giants of the grove fell prostrate, and very frequently across the stream, where they lay in all their pomp of foliage, like a leafy bridge, unwithered and forming an obstacle almost invincible to all navigation. The Indian lifted his light canoe, and carried it past the tree, but our deep-loaded bateau could not be so managed. Here my orthodoxy was shocked and my anti-military prejudice renewed, by the swearing of the soldiers, but then again my veneration for my father was, if possible, increased by his lectures against swearing, provoked by their transgressions. Nothing remained for our heroes but to attack these sylvan giants, axe in hand, and make way through their divided bodies. The assault upon fallen greatness was unanimous and unmerciful, but the resistance was tough and the process tedious, so much so that we were three days proceeding fourteen miles, having at every two hours' end at least a new tree to cut through. It was October; the trees we had to cut through were often loaded with nuts, and while I ran lightly along the branches to fill my basket with these spoils which I had great pleasure in distributing, I met with multitudes of fellow-plunderers in the squirrels of various colors and sizes, who were here numberless. This made my excursions amusing.



It was in 1760, December 27, that Sir William obtained from the Indians title to a tract of some hundred thousand acres, lying, in the main, between the two Canada creeks. In March of the following year, petition was made to the king to confirm this grant, and, as it was not customary to place more than one thousand acres to the name of one person, thirty-nine names besides Johnson's were added to the list. This the king signed in person and affixed the royal seal,—hence the deed was known as the "Royal Grant."

The endorsement is of interest:

This grant is in consideration of the faithful service rendered unto us by the said William Johnson, the grantees also yielding and paying two beaver skins, to be delivered at our castle at Windsor, on the first day of January in every year; and also the fifth part of gold and silver ore which from time to time shall be found upon said tract.

On June 23, 1753, a tract of land comprising some twenty thousand acres of land and known as the Kingsborough Patent had been granted to Arent Stevens "and others." It is believed that Johnson was one of the *others*, as he ultimately came into possession of the land.

In the midst of this fertile region the baronet started a "new settlement," which he cherished and cared for during the remaining years of his life,—settling therein as his tenantry many of his kinspeople,—the Scotch-Irish,—building school,

inn, and church, court-house and jail, supplying the inhabitants with pearl ashes from his manufactory and with lumber from his saw-mills. By the introduction of fine horses and cattle he permanently improved the Mohawk Valley stock.

We have his word that:

Before I set the example no farmer on the Mohawk river ever raised so much as a single load of hay; at present, some raise above one hundred. The like was the case with regard to sheep, to which they were entire strangers until I introduced them.

Near his flourishing "new settlement," now Johnstown, the baronet built of wood a stately mansion called Johnson Hall, and to this, from Fort Johnson, he moved in 1763. Here he planted the ancient lilacs, still blooming, and those lordly poplars which, until lately, have withstood the assaults of time. Here were the blossoming gardens which the gardener kept, "as neat as a pin." Here Sir William entertained the painted sons of the forest and house parties of fashionable friends from the new world and the old. Here the open out-of-door life appealed for many months of the year; the latest novel vied with the study of the starry heavens. Works of philosophy and of botany, of horticulture and of history lay side by side on the library table; and the grassy meadows and leafy forests were to him an open book.

## CHAPTER V

### IN THE DAYS OF SIR WILLIAM—CHURCH AND STATE

Komteyea, laett ons op gaen tot den bergh des Heeren to den huyse des Godes Jacob; op dat hy ons leese van syne wegen, en dat wy wandele in syne paden.

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths.

THE above inscription, taken from the tablet topping the door of the old Caughnawaga church might well be adopted as the watch-word of our forefathers, who were a God-fearing race. The church and the school-house soon followed the home, and Dutch Reformed and Lutheran structures were peaceable neighbors side by side.

As early as 1711, under the auspices of an English "Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," and with the direct patronage of Queen Anne, there was erected at Fort Hunter a chapel primarily and particularly for the use of the Mohawk Indians. Near at hand was the old Fort Hunter from which the little settlement afterward took its name,—a military post at the

junction of the Mohawk and Schoharie,—a small fort of hewn timber erected by an English officer, Capt. John Scott. The building was of stone and entered from the north side. In his day, Sir William Johnson was an attendant here, and, amid movable benches opposite the pulpit and sounding board, were two pews with elevated floor for the occupancy of the rector and Sir William Johnson. The latter pew was also furnished with a wooden canopy.

Rich were the furnishings of the sacred structure,—Queen Anne's handsome communion service of silver, twelve beautiful octavo Bibles, embroidered table-cloth, altar-cloth and napkins, and tasselled cushions for pulpit and desk. Picturesquely served as sexton a son of Afric in scarlet attire, and stately seemed the form and solemn the music of the first organ known to have existed west of Albany—all these in the old church which was mercilessly torn down to make room for the Erie Canal!

The oldest building in the Mohawk Valley west of the Mabie House, the parsonage, still stands,—1711, marked in large letters upon its ancient stone,—and decorated with a modern roof.

By the time Sir William reached the valley, the Third Dutch Church of Schenectady, dedicated January 13, 1734, was standing at the junction of State, Church, and Union Streets. It thus commanded the view of an approaching foe, that, if occasion required, bullets from its port-holes might



rake the streets. It was built of blue sandstone and boasted clock-tower and belfry, whence it fell to the lot of the *klokluyer* (sexton) to coax the chimes. Three times before church service was rung the bell, cast in Amsterdam and engraved:

De Klok Van de Neder duidsch gemeente Van Sconechiade door Haar self bezorcht anno 1732  
Me fecerunt De Grave et Muller Amsterdam.

At the close of service, it rang again that servants might be notified in time to prepare for the return of the family.

Inside, at one end, stood the wine-glass shaped pulpit, *preeck-stoel*, with conical sounding-board. In raised seats (*gestoelte*) along the three remaining sides of the room sat the men and boys; on *bancken* (benches) toward the centre, sat the women and girls, provided in winter with little footstoves. On *bancken* also on the side of the pulpit were seated the elders and deacons.

The *vooleezer*, who ranked next in importance to the minister, preceded him in his duties by reading, at his option, the Ten Commandments or a chapter of Holy Writ.

St. George's church, the oldest church building now standing at Schenectady, was organized in 1735. The structure was begun in 1759 and finished about 1766. It was paid for as built, a worthy member, named John Brown, allowing the work to go on no faster than he and one or two

others were able to raise the necessary funds. Sir William assisted in this matter. Part of its quaint original interior is still preserved and there may be seen the square pew of the baronet, once covered by a canopy. In the erection of this building Presbyterians and Episcopalians shared, and in it for a time both worshipped—the former to use the south door, the latter, the west door. When the pitch-pipes were introduced into Presbyterian worship, Mr. Kelly, a prominent member, is on record as having rushed frantically down the aisle exclaiming:

“Awa’ wi’ your box o’ whistles!”

The Palatines of Stone Arabia, Calvinists and Lutherans together, took measures as early as 1729 for the construction of a church edifice. It was finally built about 1735, a log house, in which the two congregations alternately worshipped. In 1744, each body erected its own house of worship.

At Niskayuna was built, about 1750, a school-house, used also as a *galat* or prayer-house, and on its site about 1760 was erected the Reformed Church of Niskayuna.

The Low Dutch Church of Caughnawaga, built of massive stone, came into being in 1763. On a tablet over the door, in Dutch, was the inscription which heads this chapter:

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths.

The steeple, built in 1795, was beautified by Sir William Johnson's dinner-bell, inscribed "S R. William Johnson Baronet 1774. Made by Miller and Ross in Eliz. Town." The pulpit stood in front of the door. Pews were square, and under the north side of the gallery were arranged *bancken* (benches), for the use of Indians and slaves.

In those days tithing men took from the wall on either side the pulpit poles with little be-belled bags fastened at end and traversed the church from pew to pew, the tinkling of bells making a merry accompaniment to the jingling of the coin, and hickory gads were often applied to the backs of mischievous boys. Foot-stoves, too, shuffled quickly from well-warmed feet to those of a colder neighbor, while the dominie depended as best he might upon the fervor of true eloquence for warmth. In from the country, in wagons provided with chairs of sheepskin bottoms, most of the congregation had ridden, the men now finding shelter and perhaps comfort and hot drinks, at some neighboring inn.

In 1750, rose the old Sand Hill Dutch Reformed Church burned in 1780, wooden, rebuilt at the close of the Revolution and resounding in December, 1799, to the praises of Washington when, in solemn state, its walls were festooned in gala array. At that time it contained but one cushioned pew, occupied by Conrad Gansevoort. Still later, a brick structure took its place. The

Sand Hill edifice stood very near the ancient blockhouse at Fort Plain.

Another little church, still standing in the town of Danube, then the Canajoharie Castle, was built of wood at the expense of Sir William Johnson in 1769 with weather-cock and steeple, surmounted by a ball of gilt. Here Mr. Kirkland preached and it was called the Castle Church. It was built for the Indians and finished at their request with a bell. On their removal, at the close of the Revolution, to Canada, they attempted, it is said, the theft of the sweet-toned instrument. Unfortunately for them, however, they forgot to muffle the clapper, whose insistent clanging betrayed its whereabouts. They were pursued and overtaken, and the coveted prize was lost to them forever.

Sir William, who patronized religion as he did learning, erected, in 1771, an Episcopal church at Johnstown, and here also he had his canopied pew opposite the vacant one dedicated to his Majesty, the King. Here he sat in state, an elegant prayer-book in his hand, and hither flocked his Indian guests. Quite at will they came and went, during service standing instead of sitting, leaning against the doorposts at times. At the close of the service, he handed his Brown Lady and her family of seven little ones into the carriage and away they drove to Johnson Hall.



The earliest pastor was Rev. Richard Mosely. After his departure, which was owing to ill health, he wrote the baronet as follows:

SIR WILLIAM

I am at a loss to express my gratitude to you for your unbounded goodness to me during my residence at Johnstown, and particularly at my departure. I shall always retain a most grateful sense of your generosity, and that it may please God long to prolong your life, and possess you with a good state of health, will be the constant prayer and wishes of one who has the honor of subscribing himself,

Sir William

Your much Obliged,  
and very Humble Serv't

R. MOSELY.

The Palatine Stone Church of Palatine reared its sides to the light in 1770. This beautiful building, with interior remodelled, still stands. Its goblet-shaped pulpit, provided with sounding-board, was slate colored, we are told, and the pews "wore a dress of Spanish brown." A gilded weather-cock topped the steeple, and the "tinkling triangle" summoned the worshippers of early days. Over its door was inscribed "Erbauet im Yahr Christo 1770. Den 18 ten Aug."

Within the walls of this dear old edifice, upon its anniversary celebration, that honored citizen of the Mohawk Valley, Horatio Seymour, said, in reply to a wish upon the part of another speaker

that the moral needs of the community would justify the tearing down and enlarging of the building:

If the religious requirements of this community should ever demand a larger place of worship build anew and on some other spot. For the sake of your fathers, whose memories and deeds we cherish, for the sake of yourselves and your posterity, I beg of you not to tear down that old landmark. Let it stand as a monument to the love of God and the religious liberty of the builders. When God, in His own good time sees fit to put it back to the dust from which it sprang, He will do so, but don't, let me beseech of you, tear it down.

About 1725, a log church was built on the side of the river, in the present German Flats, then Burnetsfield, and before the year 1730, Nicholas Woolaber had given land for the site of a stone place of worship, in regard to whose erection we have the following quaint document:

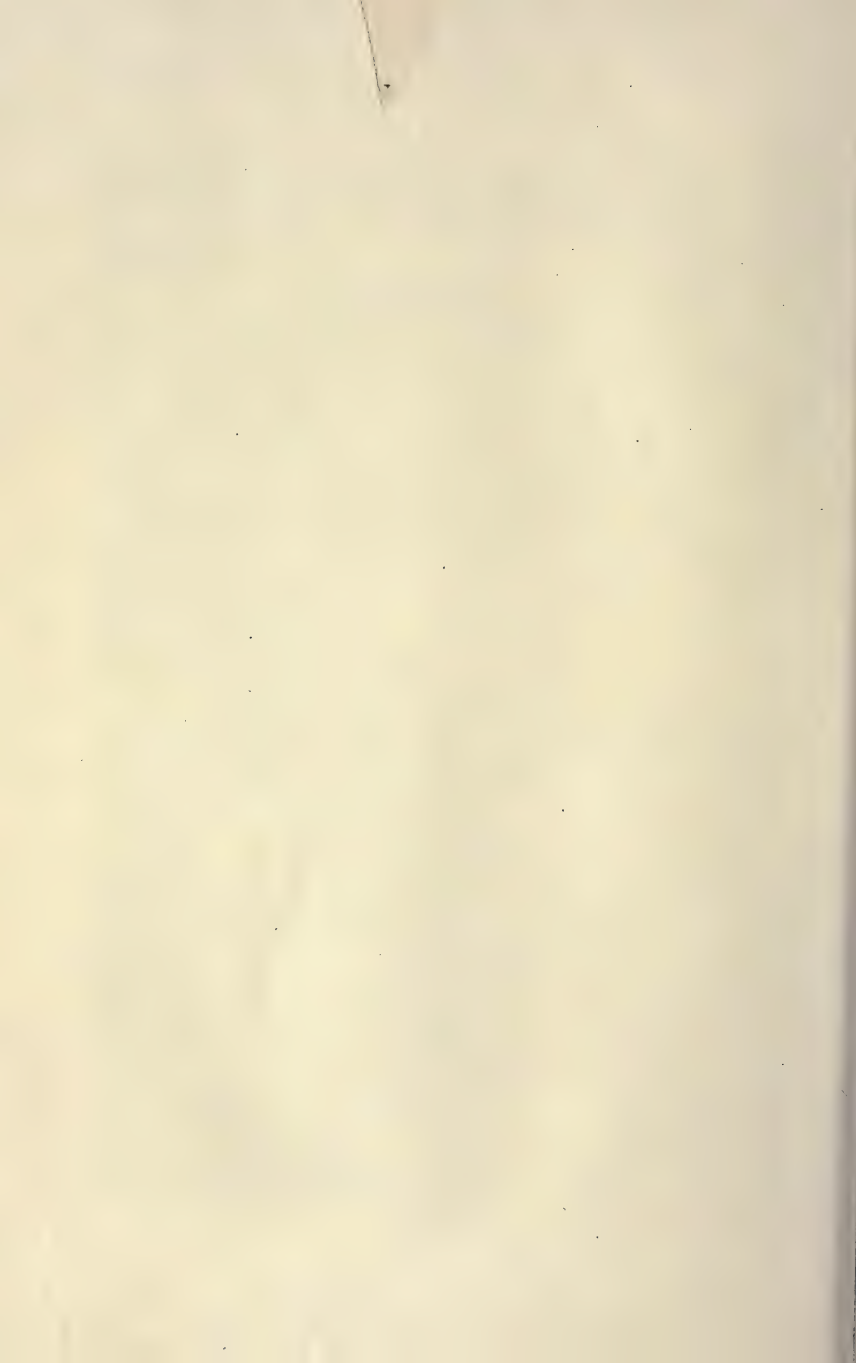
The humble petition of Johan Joost Herckheimer, of Burnet's Field, in the county of Albany, yeoman, in behalf of himself and the rest of the inhabitants, High Germans, living there, humbly sheweth

That your petitioner and sundry other High Germans to the number of one hundred families and upwards, at present resident at Burnet's Field, in this province, propose with your Excellency's permission to erect a Stone Church on the South side of the River, upon a convenient spot of ground, already



The Palatine Church, 1770

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox





purchased by the Inhabitants for the worship of Almighty God, according to the discipline of the Reformed Protestant Dutch church. But finding themselves unable alone to furnish and complete the same, your petitioner therefore, in behalf of the said Inhabitants, humbly prays your Excellency will be favorably pleased to grant a Brief or Lychense to crave the voluntary assistance and contribution of all well-disposed persons within this province, for completing the said structure altogether, intended for Divine Worship.

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray

JOHAN JOOST HERGHEIMER

Fort George  
in  
New York  
October 6, 1751  
Be it so

G. CLINTON

The building was erected but was not complete in 1757 when burned by the Indians, hence the following:

To all Christian people to whom this shall come. Whereas the Inhabitants on the South side of the River of Burnet's Field on the German Flatts whereas, we are about to erect a Church wherein the High Dutch Language in the Protestant way should be preached.

Before the late war, and when the war began, we were obliged to leave of building and in the war everything was discharged, and as we were desirous



to have a place of worship, we have begun to build a Church, but we find ourselves not able to finish the same, occasioned by the trouble we had in the war, that is to say, all our Houses and Barns, with all we had in them where burnt and our Horses and Cattle where killed and takeing away, and a great many our People takeing Prisoner by the Enemy, which has enabled me to finish the Church. For them Reasons we have desired two of our Members that is to say Johan Jost Herkemer and Hendrick Bell to enable us to have our Church finished and we hope all good people will take our cause in consideration, as we have no place of Worship now but a small Log House.

We are, in behalf of the Congregation and ourselves Gentlemen,

Your most Humble Servants,

AUGUSTINUS HESS

RUDOLF SCHOMAKER

PETER VOLS

N.B.—I being old and unable, I therefore send Peter Vols to do the business of collecting for me.

JOHANN JOST HERCHHEIMER.

And the church was rebuilt.

On the keystone over the arch above the wooden door was inscribed:

“J. H. E. s. q. 1767”

The structure, which was situated toward the extremity of the Flats fourteen miles west of Little Falls, was one story in height, dimensions forty-eight by fifty-eight feet. The walls were thick and there were square buttresses at the

corners. In 1756 this church, with other buildings was surrounded by an earthwork, under direction of Sir William Johnson, as a fortification against the Indians. The tower was open and contained a swivel. The pews in those days were bequeathed by will. In the year 1811 four hundred dollars were spent in repairing this ancient building. The roof was raised and upper windows and a gallery were added.

Owing to the spring floods a church had undoubtedly been built on the north side prior to 1757. In 1758 the Rev. Abraham Rosencrantz began his ministrations, taking in both sides of the river as part of his parish. In the absence of a clergyman, Dr. Petrie was accustomed to conduct the services.

This church also was burned in 1757.

GERMAN FLATTS,  
Aug. 20, 1770.

I, on the end undersigned, testify hereby that I have given an acre of land for a High Dutch Reformed Church on the stone ridge, but whereas, the church, with all its writings, in the devastation of this place by the Indians anno 1757, in an unfortunate manner, has been burned away, and, whereas I have this land wherein this acre lies transferred to my son Dietrich and the same likewise did precede me to eternity, I John Jost Petry, testify that the oldest son of the deceased Dietrich must give other writings as soon as the same comes to his years and a new church,

with my consent, on the same acre of land build again. Such I do attest with my own hand and seal.

his  
John Jost    X    Petry                    (L. S.)  
mark  
In presence  
MARCUS PETRY.

In this connection, it will be right to notice what provision had been made for the spiritual wants of the red man. Dominie Megapolensis, who lived at Albany from 1642 to 1648, was the earliest Protestant clergyman to labor among the Mohawks, preaching to them fluently in their own tongue and winning great success.

Little work was undertaken for many years after his departure, but a Hollander, the Rev. Mr. Dellijs, was in the field previous to 1691, being an occasional visitor, and making use of the services of an interpreter. Rev. Mr. Lydius was engaged in the work about the same time, having a salary of sixty dollars per year.

The Rev. Bernard Freeman, of Schenectady, labored in the Indian field five years, from about 1700, and was to some extent successful, having applied himself to the mastery of the native tongue. He translated the Morning and Evening Prayers, Gospel of St. Matthew, portions of Genesis, Exodus, the Psalms, etc.

In 1702, came the Rev. Mr. Talbot, under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the



Gospel in Foreign Parts, followed, in 1704, by the Rev. Thoroughgood Moor, who met with but slight success. Mr. Moor was provided with a little house and a salary of one hundred pounds a year. He brought two servants, and was allowed twenty pounds for outfit and thirty pounds for passage money. He was author of the first book in the Mohawk language, *Another Tongue brought in to confess the Great Saviour of the World*. With him was associated a Mr. Smith, of whom little is known, but Mr. Moor remained for three years and is supposed to have been drowned on the return voyage.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Barclay, first rector of St. Peter's Church, Albany, who labored from 1708 to 1712. In 1710 Mr. Barclay says, "From New York to the utmost bounds of my parish, there is no minister but myself."

During his pastorate the Fort Hunter chapel was built for Indian worshippers.

In 1712, the Rev. William Andrews succeeded the Rev. Mr. Barclay in his work among the Indians. In the *Documentary History of New York*, his reception is quaintly recorded in the following words:

Then Terachjoris Sachim of Canajoharie, the upper Castle of the Mohawks Stood up and Sayed that he was deputed by those of that Castle to come to Albany to Receive in their name the Reverend Mr. William Andrews for their Minister who they understood is

Sent, (on their Request) by the Great queen of Great Britain to Instruct them in the Christian Religion for the good of their Souls Service, and Gave M<sup>r</sup> Andrews his hand and promised for those of that Castle to give all the Protection and Incouragement unto him that shall lye in their power.

Hendrick one of the Sachims of the Maquas Country stood up and Say'd that he was very glad that y<sup>e</sup> Reverend M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Andrews was come over for their Minister to Instruct them in the Christian Religion for the Good of their Souls, and that he was deputed with those now here present by the other Sachims of that Castle to Receive him in their names for their Minister and father and promist for themselves and those of the s<sup>d</sup> Castle to give him all the protection Incouragement and assistance possibly they can, and always be faithfull and obedient to him and doth heartly Return thanks to her Maj<sup>ty</sup> the Great queen of Great Britain that She has been pleased to Grant their Requests and also to the hon<sup>ble</sup> Society for propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts and doth thank his Excellency Robert Hunter Esq<sup>r</sup> &c and Coll<sup>o</sup> Nicolson for their Intercession in Getting their Request Granted the fruits whereof are now to be seen.

Hendrick sayd further that he desired in y<sup>e</sup> name of the sd Sachims of the Mohawks that none of their land might be clandestinely bought from any of them for that would breed a faction and disturbance among them and would be an occasion of leaving their Country and oblige them to go over to the Ottowawas or farr Indians where they should have no Christian Minister to Instruct them in the Christian Religion, nor that they should not be brought under that yoke

as those at Canada are who are obliged to pay the tenths of all to their priests. Gave a belt of wampum.

Mr. Andrews Reply'd that he was not come for the lucre of their land nor to lay any burden on them but to Instruct them in the true Christian Religion and that no land Should be bought of them in a Clandestine Maner, if it Lays in his power to prevent it, and that the honourable Society had taken care to pay him.

The Reverend Thomas Barclay desired that the Com<sup>n</sup> would be pleased to procure men, Sles and horses for Conveying the Goods of the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Andrews to the Mohawks Country and to pay the Charges thereof which they promised to do with all readiness.

The Com<sup>n</sup> Gave the following presents to the Mohawk Indians viz<sup>t</sup> 6 kegs powder, 6 boxes of lead 12 Blankets 12 Shirts 2 duffel Blankets 5 pair Stockings 200 flints & 50 lb. Shot.

At a council held at Albany with the Indians in 1714, Governor Hunter reminded them of their wish for a pastor and church, and then urged their better attendance.

They replied:

BROTHER CORLAER:

You put us in mind that we desired a Minister in every one of our Castles to instruct us in the way to eternal life. We own that we desired it. But when we consider that the Christians here, when it is a Sabbath Day's what fine cloathes they have when they go to church and that goods are still so dear that

we can not purchase Sunday cloathes, but would be necessitated to go to church with an old bear skin and deer skin. We have deferred that matter till goods are cheaper, that we may have cloathes suitable to go to church withall.

The Rev. Mr. Andrews remained three years at the mission and had at one time thirty-eight communicants and some one hundred and fifty attendants as well as twenty Indian children, pupils at a little wooden schoolhouse near by. In the year 1714, he had a part of Mr. Freeman's translation printed at the request of the latter and distributed, namely, The Morning and Evening Prayers, the Litany, the Church Catechism, Family Prayers, and several chapters of the Old and New Testaments. The reverend gentleman, however, became quite discouraged with his flock and sought another field in 1719. "Heathen they are," he remarked, "and heathen they still will be."

The Rev. Petrus Van Driessen succeeded Mr. Andrews in his work with the Indians and must have won their hearts for, in 1722, he makes the petition, at their request, that he may be permitted to continue service among them. He was granted a license to build a "meeting house for the Indians in the Mohawk's Country," and he probably did so.

In the present village of St. Johnsville is located an old burying-ground on what is known to have



been, before the Revolution, the site of the present Reformed Church. Just what the date of the erection is not known, but it is believed that Indians as well as white men worshipped there. The late Rufus Grider, a careful student of early Mohawk history, was of opinion that this land lies well within the limits of the Indian deed granted Rev. Mr. Van Driessen in 1732, and that it was, in fact, the site of the Indian chapel which he built.

The deed is signed by eighteen Indians representing the clans of the Wolf, the Turtle, and the Bear. The tract granted lay "on the North side of the Mohawk River next west of the Warren Patent  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles long" and was given to and for and in

Consideration of the Love and good will and affection which we have and bear for the Rev<sup>d</sup> Petrus Van Driessen and Johannes Ehl—ministers of the Gospel and also in Consideration of the great Zeal, unwearied pains, Expences and trouble for these 20 years past by the above mentioned Peter Van Driessen and his fatherly care in the instructing of us and our People in the principles of the Christian Religion and faith, bringing us into the fold of Christ's church and partakers of his Sacrament as a good and faithful Pastor of Christ's fold ought to do to our great satisfaction and credit.

In 1731 Rev. John Miln who had been rector of St. Peter's since 1723 arranged to pay twenty-

one visits a year of five days each. Henry Barclay assisted him as catechist. He had, in 1741, five hundred Indians under his care, of whom few, by 1743, remained unbaptized. The war with France interrupted his labors and he was succeeded in 1746 by Rev. John Ogilvie, rector of St. Peter's. Amid great discouragements he persevered for many years, having as assistant Rev. John Jacob Oel, who remained until the beginning of the Revolution. The latter served at Canajoharie, but afterward among the Oneidas.

Mr. Ogilvie was succeeded in the work by Rev. Henry Munro, whose pastorate continued until 1770, when he gave place to Rev. John Stuart. The Indian Castle church, built at Canajoharie by Sir William Johnson, was dedicated by Mr. Munro just at the close of his pastorate.

From 1770 Rev. John Stuart, a popular and useful pastor, performed his duties until disturbed in 1775 by the approaching war. He was the last missionary among the Mohawks, preaching and conversing in their native tongue.

Rev. Samuel Kirkland was the first Protestant minister among the Senecas, but misfortune attended his work, and, in 1666, he transferred his labors to the Oneida nation, with which he remained for more than forty years. He was much beloved by his people and his influence did much to preserve neutrality on their part during the Revolution. He served as chaplain at Fort Stanwix from 1776 to 1777. In 1784 he resumed

his chosen work among the Indians. A convert and firm friend of this religious leader was the Indian chief Skenandoa, so noted for his eloquence. The two are buried in the Hamilton College grounds and the red man's monument bears this inscription:

### SKENANDOA

This monument is erected by the Northern Missionary Society in testimony of their respect for the memory of Skenandoa, who died in the peace and hope of the Gospel, on the 11th of March, 1816. Wise, eloquent and brave, he long swayed the counsels of his tribe, whose confidence and affection he eminently enjoyed. In the war which placed the Canadas under the crown of Great Britain, he was actively engaged against the French; in that of the Revolution, he espoused that of the colonies; and ever afterward remained a firm friend of the United States. Under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Kirkland, he embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and having exhibited their power in a long life adorned by every Christian virtue, he fell asleep in Jesus at the advanced age of one hundred years.

Hamilton College was founded in 1793, owing largely to the influence of Kirkland.

On June 25, 1873, at the dedication at Hamilton College of the old Kirkland memorial, speeches were made by Thomas and David Skenandoa, brothers, and translated as follows:

BROTHERS—We have come from our homes to

join hands with you to do honor to the memory of the friend of our forefathers. We remember the good Kirkland as the faithful friend of our great grandfathers.

He was sent by the Good Spirit to teach the Indians to be good and happy. As the sun cometh in the early morning, so he came from the east in 1766, to gladden the hearts of my people and to cover them with the light of the Great Spirit. He came in and went out before them; he walked hand in hand with the great Sconondoa.

As Kirkland was their counsellor, the physician, the spiritual father, friend, so was Sconondoa like the tall hemlock, the glory of our people, the mighty sachem and counsellor of the Iroquois and the true friend of the white man. His soul was a beam of fire, his heart was big with goodness, his head was like a clear lamp and his tongue was great in council.

Kirkland was to my nation like a great light in a dark place. His soul was like the sun, without any dark spots upon it, and we first learned through him to be good. Our father then gave him much land and he gave to your children Hamilton Oneida Academy.

Where to-day are Kirkland and Sconondoa? They are gone! The Great Spirit reached out of his window and took them from us and we see them no more. When sixty-nine snows had fallen and melted away, the good Kirkland went to his long home.

And at the age of 110 years we laid beside him John Sconondoa, the great sachem of the Iroquois. Arm in arm, as brothers, they walked life's trail; and, united in death, nothing can separate them; but they will go up together in the great resurrection.



When they went down to their long sleep the night was dark; when the morning came it did not remove the darkness from our people. They wet their eyes with big drops and a heavy cloud was on them.

The council fires of the Iroquois died and their hearts grew faint; then our people scattered like frightened deer and we Indians here to-day standing by the mighty dead, are the only few of the once powerful Iroquois. They are all gone, but the deeds of Kirkland and Sconondoa will never die; their memory is dear to us and will not fail; so long as the sun lights the sky by day and the moon by night, we will rub the mould and dust from their gravestones and say:

“Brothers, here sleep the good and the brave!”

Through the influence of Sir William, a portion of Albany County was set off in 1772 and called Tryon, in honor of the Governor. It was likewise divided into five districts as follows:

The first, or Mohawk district, to be bounded easterly by the west bounds of the township of Schenectada, north as far as the settlements shall extend south to the south bounds of the county, and west by a north and south line crossing the Mohawk at Anthony's Nose.

The second, or Stone Arabia district, to be entirely on the north side of the river, bounded easterly by the west bounds of the late mentioned district, northerly as the former, and westwardly by a north and south line to cross the Mohawk River at the Little Falls.

The third, or Canajoharie district, to be bounded

north by the Mohawk river, south by the bounds of the county, east by the west bounds of the first mentioned district, and west by the aforesaid line to be continued south from the Little Falls.

The fourth, or Kingsland district, to be bounded southerly by the Mohawk river, easterly by a north line from the Little Falls, northerly and westerly as far as the settlements extend.

The fifth, or German Flats district, to be bounded northerly by the Mohawk river, easterly by the line to be continued south of the Little Falls, southerly as far as the county extends, and westerly by the boundary line settled at a treaty made in 1768.

The county seat was located at Johnstown and, in 1772, a court-house and jail were erected under the superintendence of Sir William Johnson. Early court records show the payment of expenses incurred by members of Assembly and cash paid for the heads of wolves.

In the year 1882, at the centennial celebration of the erection of this, the only colonial court still standing in the State of New York, the late Hon. Horatio Seymour, that eloquent orator and beloved adopted son of our native valley, said, in part:

While this country owes much to all European races, and to all religious creeds, we should never cease to be grateful that the Hudson and Mohawk were first colonized by the Hollanders, and thus these great portals to the interior of our country were thrown open to all lineages and all forms of religious

faith and political opinion. It is the glory of our land that almost every European language is spoken at its firesides and used on each Sabbath in prayer and praise to the God of all languages and climes. Men of the valley of the Mohawk, you have grown rich on the land which your fathers made free at the cost of blood and trials. Your villages and farm-houses show your wealth. Do you bear in mind what you owe to your fathers? Do you show to the world that you honor them? Do you put up monuments to tell the great crowd which passes through your valley that the hills which rise from the banks of your river, and the streams which pass their waters into it, should be looked upon with reverence by every American?

. . . . .

I trust that this celebration will be followed by others in New York, held with a view to the erection of monuments or to bringing out the local histories which shall keep fresh in the mind of our people those events in the past which have shaped its destinies. We owe it to ourselves and to those who come after us, to keep the record clear. We owe it to our country to kindle the patriotism of our people by giving proof of the reverence in which we hold the memories of all who have made sacrifices for its welfare. The duty of honoring our fathers is not only enjoined as one of a religious character, or as a bond which strengthens family ties, but is also one which upholds and strengthens States.

## CHAPTER VI

### IN THE DAYS OF SIR WILLIAM—HOME, SCHOOL, AND SOCIETY

THE first white men's homes in the Mohawk Valley were, undoubtedly, log houses, or such rude buildings as the early pioneers could easily throw together until time should permit the planting and harvesting of crops. Similar structures continued to be erected for many years thereafter by all such hardy adventurers as were then pushing forward into the unknown wilderness. They were reared by the Dutch of Schenectady and by the later Palatines of the upper valley. But more pretentious edifices followed. In Schenectady, early stood trim little rows of wooden houses, gable ends to the street, weather-cocks on vanes, and neat Dutch ovens protruding in the rear. Similar buildings were often made of Holland *steen*, and then the dates were anchored upon them or outlined in colored tiles.

The late Judge Cady has thus described a colonial home of the period:

We have seen the type and warmed ourselves at the hospitable fireplace with crane, pothooks and



trammels occupying nearly the side of the room, while outer doors were so opposed that a horse might draw in the huge log by one entrance, leaving by the other. Strange, too, to our childish eyes were the curious chimneys of tree limbs encrusted with mortar. Then the wide fireplace was universal; the huge brick oven indispensable. Stoves were not, though an occasional Franklin was possessed. The turkey was oft cooked suspended before the crackling fire; the corncake baked in the low coal-covered bake kettle; the potatoes roasted beneath the ashes and apples upon a ledge of bricks; nuts and cider were in store in every house. As refinement progressed and wealth advanced, from the fireside wall extended a square cornice, perhaps six feet deep by ten feet wide, from which depended a brave valance of gay, printed chintz, or snowy linen, perchance decked with mazy network and tasseled fringe wrought by the curious hand of the mistress or her daughter. These, too, have we seen.

. . . . .

The hum of the great and the buzz of the little spinning wheel were heard in every home. By the great wheel, the fleecy rolls of wool, often hand carded, were turned into the firm yarns that, by the motion of deft fingers, grew into warm stockings and mittens, or, by the stout and shining loom, became gay coverlets of scarlet, or blue and white, or the graver "press cloth" for garb of women and children, or the butternut or brown or black homespun of men's wear. The little wheel mainly drew from twirling distaff the thread that should make the fine twilled linen, the glory and pride of mistress or maid who

could show her handiwork in piles of sheets, tablecloths and garments. Upon these, too, were often lavished garniture of curious needlework, hemstitch and herringbone and lace stitch. Plain linsey and linen wear were, too, fields for taste to disport in, while the patient and careful toil must not go unchronicled that from the wrecks of old and worn-out clothes produced wondrous resurrection in the hit or miss or striped rag carpet, an accessory of so much comfort, so great endurance, and often so great beauty. . . . The well-sweep, or bubbling spring, supplied the clear, cold water.

The women, like all American women of early times, were as thrifty and industrious as their husbands and sons were brave. They dipped their own candles and made their own soap. There was no false aristocracy among them. They did not scorn to wash and bake and brew. Their housewifery was a matter of honest pride. They raised their own flax and sheared their own sheep, and the big and little spinning-wheels adorned the living rooms. They wore short skirts, bodices with mutton-leg sleeves, white cuffs, outside pockets, high-heeled shoes, and high combs, and indulged in snuff. When a maiden was married, no matter how young, she donned a beruffled white cap. Little time was spent in idleness. There was always spinning or sewing or knitting or darning or patching to be done, and when sleep came at last, it was the sweeter that it had been richly earned.

The girls, their mothers' help at home, all married young and became helpmeets indeed. The wedding was duly celebrated by the opening of *the* room. Horns and tin pans sometimes aided in producing jollification. Such an occasion once occurred in old Fort Herkimer at a time when Indians had come to take it by surprise. The red men, thinking from the unearthly din inside that some unusually vociferous and numerically powerful foe was ensconced within, hastened away in "double quick."

During life, the good people prepared for death, and laid in store the cask of wine one day to be used. No one was expected to attend a funeral without invitation. The Dutch sextons of Schenectady charged an extra shilling for each visit made beyond town limits on their errands of bidding guests,—to Hoffman's Ferry, three shillings more.

The best room, sometimes called *dood kamer*, was in readiness. No women followed the pallbearers to the grave, and, on the return of the party, all partook, at tables set for the occasion, of spiced wine and cake, while the men were provided with pipes and tobacco.

Some few slaves were owned by both Dutch and German settlers and were kindly treated. "Pels Nichol" punished the disobedient ones, and such appeal to their superstitious fears was generally all that was needed.

Some of the wealthier farmers provided their

farm-hands with generous feasts at harvest time. The great holidays of the year were, of course, occasions for general merriment. *Pinkster*, the Low Dutch kept as holy day. Easter Monday, the young people celebrated with eggs colored in different tints.

The missionary, Samuel Kirkland, said of the people of Amsterdam:

The manner in wch ye ppl, in ye parts keep Xmas day in commemory of the Birth of ye Saviour as ya pretend is very affecting and strik'g. They generally assemble for read'g prayers or Divine service, but after They allow of no work or servile labour on ye day and ye following—their servants are free, but drinking, swearing, fighting and frolic'g are not only allowed, but seem to be essential to ye joy of ye day.

Christmas celebrations lasted until after New Year's day. Upon New Year's eve, the large houses were aglow in all their rooms, reflecting a scene of great good cheer and merriment. There were open fireplaces, lighted candles, tables set with steaming bowls of punch, roasts of turkey, chicken, and pig, platters of headcheese, *rolliches*, souse, bread, pickles, *olakoeks*, and crullers, and nice triangular pieces cut from pies baked in enormous pewter platters.

Then came the Dutch or German hymn and the speechmaking and jokes. Finally, after the table had been removed, came the fiddle and the dancing—the former often manipulated by black Sambo



standing on a chair or in a corner, the latter executed by all, young and old, black and white, the men, for the most part, arrayed in homespun and the women in calico.

New Year's calls were frequent. One of the salutations among the Low-Dutch-speaking part of the population ran when rendered into English thus:

I wish you Happy New Year!  
Long may you live, happy may you die,  
And Heaven be yours bye and bye!

We are often forcibly reminded that the Mohawk Dutch people were not Puritans. "A Dutchman loves his horse more than he does his wife" is a saying, and though we dispute the truth of this proposition, the Mohawk Dutchman always loved his horse. There was horse trading at the inn, and horse-races were always a favorite amusement.

The Dutchman, too, loved beer, and it flowed plentifully upon his table. Nevertheless, we do not think that he loved strong drink any better than most of the colonists of other races. He took beer pure and simple, and never developed a taste for the mixed drinks common to other localities. There was much liquor, but little drunkenness.

Said the late Hon. Robert Earl:

The Mohawk Germans were not Puritans and they

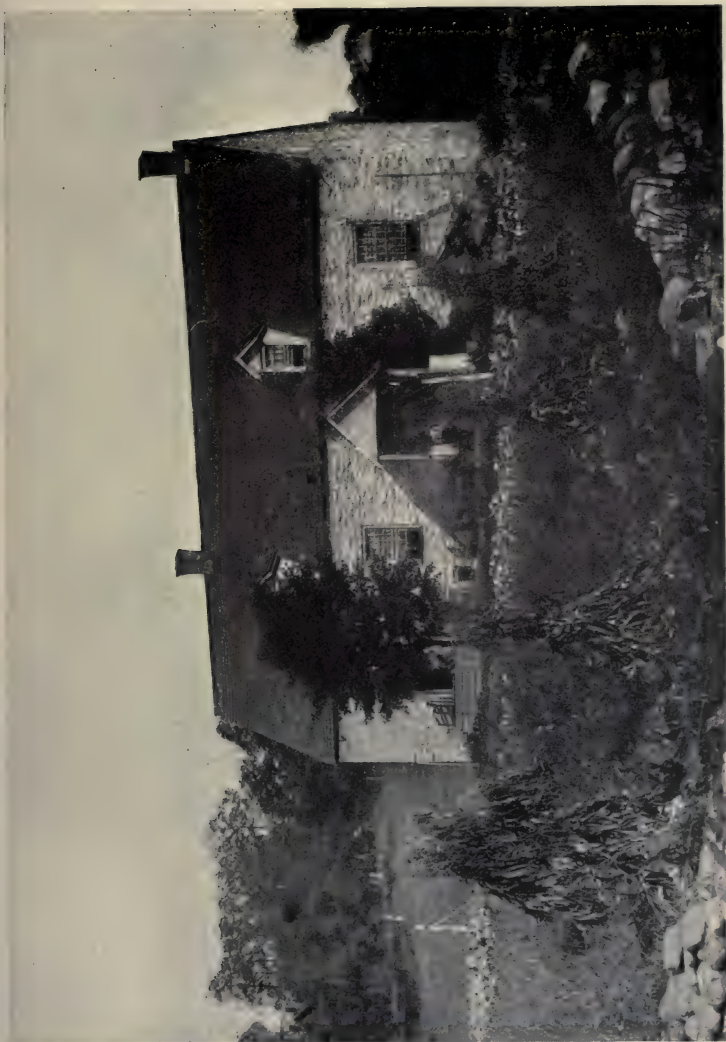
certainly did not believe that their religion ought to take the sunshine out of their lives. They were robust men and fond of robust sports. They feared God and read their Bibles and were generally honest, good neighbors, thrifty and industrious and their virtues, I believe, were as little shaded with vices as those of any body of people at that time anywhere in the country or in England.

These same farmers, who had been taught the Heidelberg Catechism and were generally church members, were also punctual attendants upon the Sunday morning services. They often spent the afternoon in visiting among themselves, as their German progenitors had been wont to do before them.

Being jolly, open-hearted people, they were given to hospitality, and few were ever turned away from the door.

No more striking figure left its impress upon the later colonial life of the Mohawk Valley than that of Sir William Johnson—after 1753, Baronet. Coming to the valley, a young Irishman of excellent descent, in the year 1738, he assumed charge of the estates of his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, who had purchased much land in that region.

He located first in the vicinity of the present Amsterdam. There he started a country store and installed as his housekeeper a young German girl named Catharine Weisenberg, whom he bought from her apprenticeship and to whom he



The Frey House, 1739  
Photograph by S. Dygert





was soon after legally married. Later buildings erected in the vicinity gave the location in time the name "Johnson's Settlement." Here John Johnson, his son, was born in 1742. A good grist-mill and the fine old stone house heretofore described, named Mount Johnson from a little hill near by on which the watch was kept, were finished in 1742. In this house were born Sir William's two daughters, Nancy and Mary.

An early death was the fate of Sir William's German wife. In 1747 a new mistress was installed in the house,—Caroline, niece of the famous Indian chief, "King Hendrick," daughter of his brother Abraham. William of Canajoharie and two daughters were the fruit of this union, which was undoubtedly an excellent one from political motives, immensely strengthening Sir William's powerful influence with the Indians.

Caroline died in 1753, and very soon her niece, the fascinating Molly Brant, sister of the famous Joseph Brant, became the housekeeper and companion of Sir William Johnson. This "Brown Lady," then but sixteen years of age, was the mother of eight children during the following twenty years.

In 1755, Mount Johnson became Fort Johnson. In 1746, Sir Peter Warren's nephew had been appointed commissioner of Indian affairs. After the battle of Lake George, November 27, 1753, he was known as Sir William Johnson, Baronet.

The coat of arms to which he was now

entitled bore for its motto "Deo Regique Debeo." The design consisted of a shield supported by two Indians and decorated with three fleur-de-lis. A band across the shield was adorned with two shells with a heart between them, on which lay an open hand. The shield itself was heart-shaped and another hand above it held a dart.

In the old, gray mansion grew up to womanhood Sir William's two daughters, Mary and Nancy. They are described as tall, handsome girls with beautiful hair which they wore neatly braided and tied with pretty ribbons. How they must have brightened the winter landscape with their scarlet coats, and how picturesque in summer as they strolled in the garden arrayed in chintz wrappers and green silk petticoats! Provided with an English governess, they were kept much in seclusion. They read their Prayer Books, their Bibles, the latest romances, and Rollin's *Ancient History*. They cared for their flowers and their birds, and were expert in finest needlework. Walks in summer, sledge-drives in winter, shuttlecock, sometimes, of an evening,—these were their simple diversions. Nancy was married to Daniel Claus in 1762; Mary married Sir Guy Johnson, her cousin, in 1763.

At the expense of Sir William's purse and estate, his Indian confederates thronged about Fort Johnson at state times for counsel or for impending war; dark-browed warriors invading the homestead and the squaws cooking in the camps erected along

the fertile flats. Here often stalked the redoubtable Brant, crafty yet generous, well educated and polished, remarkable for courage as well as for courtesy, pleasing of face, symmetrical of figure, erect, dignified, tall, of lofty bearing and commanding presence.

There might sometimes have been seen the chief, Abraham, father of Caroline, and his elder brother, the tall, somewhat corpulent and "venerable and noble-looking old chief King Hendrick," it may be, on state occasions<sup>1</sup> "splendidly arrayed in a suit of light blue, made in an antique mode and trimmed with broad satin lace"—the very suit bestowed upon him by royalty on his momentous visit to London so many years before.

There, too, was Mistress Molly's father, Niclaus Brant, diplomatic father of a distinguished son, taciturn, courteous,—a man well fitted for the diplomatic errands on which he was sometimes employed.

Still another distinguished figure of the times was hospitably entertained at Fort Johnson in the year 1749,—the Swedish naturalist, Kalm, who bore a letter of introduction from Cadwallader Colden. Provided with a guide to Niagara and letters of recommendation to Captain Lindsay, at Oswego, the guest wrote a letter of warm thanks from the latter place in recognition of the courtesy.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of an American Lady*, p. 25.

Says the Rev. Mr. Hawley, missionary to the Six Nations:

On Friday (May 25, 1753) we left Albany. Mr. Woodbridge and I set out for Mount Johnson, about thirty-six miles off, on Mohawk river, to pay our compliments to Colonel Johnson and obtain his countenance in favour of our mission. At noon we came to Schenectady, a town in some respects similar to Albany, but more pleasant. We crossed the ferry and by a letter from Colonel Jacob Wendell of Boston, were introduced to his friend, Major Glen, who hospitably received us. Having dined, we proceeded, and had a very pleasant ride up the Mohawk river, on the north side. At sunset we were politely received at Colonel Johnson's gate by himself in person. Here we lodged. His mansion was stately, and situate a little distance from the river, on rising ground, and adjacent to a stream which turned his mill. This gentleman was well known in his civil, military and private character. He was the first civil character in the county of Albany at that day. And after this, by means of the war, which commenced in 1755, and his connection with the Indians, of whom he was appointed sole superintendent for that part of the continent, he arose to great eminence. In 1756 he was made a baronet. It was favorable to our mission to have his patronage, which I never lost. . . . Mr. Woodbridge and I took our leave of him in the morning, rode up to the ford and crossed the river and came over to the south side and rode to what was called the Mohawk castle, near which was a stone chapel and a village of Indians, situate on Schoharry creek, not



far from the place where it discharges its waters into the Mohawk.

Some description of the lord of the manor has been entertainingly given by Mrs. Anne McVickar Grant in her account of her journey through the wilderness of that period.

He was an uncommonly tall well-made man with a fine countenance which, however, had rather an expression of dignified sedateness, approaching to melancholy. He appeared to be taciturn, never wasting words on matters of no importance, but highly eloquent when the occasion called forth his powers.

Mrs. Julia Grant, still another interesting writer and traveller of the day, amplifies the picture thus:

<sup>1</sup> A little scant of six feet high say five feet eleven and a half inches, neck massive, shoulders broad, chest deep and full, limbs large and showing every sign of great physical strength. Head large and finely shaped. Countenance open, frank and always beaming with good nature and good humor,—a real Irishman he is for wit. Eyes large, black-gray or grayish black. Hair dark brown, with a tinge of auburn in certain lights.

She speaks also of his great hospitality, of the delicacies and rare wines his board affords, of his

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Buell's *Sir William Johnson*. Copyright, 1903, by D. Appleton and Company.

delightful conversation racy with Indian anecdote and rich in knowledge of the authors of the day.

That Sir William already devoted many of his spare moments to self-improvement we learn from an order sent from him to London, of date 1749, in which he requires, besides several works on philosophy and history, several fine prints, pencils, writing-paper, sealing wax, "a good globe to hang in the hall with light," "a good French horn, with the notes," "a good common hunting horn," "a good loud trumpet," "the pictures of some of the best running horses at New Market."

The following document is something to the same purpose.

MOUNT JOHNSON, August the 20th, 1752.

SIR:

Having the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with your brother, Doctor Shuckbrugh of New York whom I have a singular regard for, induced me to apply to you for what I may want in your way, although but a trifle. Having lately had a pretty large collection of books from London, shall at present only desire you will please to send me what pamphlets are new and worth reading, also the Gentleman's Magazine from Nov'br 1750 to the last, and the Monthly Review from the same time; also the Newspapers regularly and stitched up. You have only to deliver them to Mr. George Liberwood, merch't there, who will forward them to me, and will pay your am't yearly.

Having nothing farther to add at present (but beg

you will send me those things regularly and punctually) I conclude sir,

Y'r very humble serv't, W. J.

*To Mr. Shuckbrugh, stationer, London.*

Meanwhile, settlements were rapidly spreading along the valley. George Clarke, appointed, in 1736, Governor of the Colony of New York, built, in 1738, the first house within the present village of Fort Plain. It was situated on the site of the late A. J. Wagner's home, and was forty feet, or nearly, in width, and two stories high, with fine spacious rooms, broad halls, and wide staircase provided with white oaken balustrades. Governor Clarke's pleasure boats were anchored on the river. He distinguished himself by keeping a few pet goats. These worthy animals presently disappeared and were eventually found ranging at will the high hills of the present Gyssenberg—thus happily named for them. But Governor Clarke's family did not take kindly to the inhospitable and secluded wilderness, and residence there was brief.

Near Palatine Church the pioneer settler, Johan Peter Wagner, built, in 1750, a stone building, still standing. At about the same period was reared Fort House, so named in honor of its builder, Christian House, who erected it for George Klock. The home of Gosen Van Alstyne, at the present Canajoharie, was of about the same date.

Hendrick Henry Frey, a native of Zurich, Switzerland, erected a log house in the vicinity of Palatine Bridge, somewhat previous to 1700, and there lived in peace with his Indian neighbors. In 1739, there rose in its place the historic stone building which still stands with its many port-holes, and which was stockaded during the French and Indian wars.

Early in the eighteenth century, the Rev. Jacob Ehle, an accomplished minister of the Gospel, settled a mile or two west of Mr. Frey. He is believed to have occupied a wooden building at first, but, in 1752, his son Peter built a one-story stone dwelling which also stands, with the date plainly visible on its side.

The oldest house in the present town of Johnstown is known as the Drumm House. It was built during the days of Sir William, in 1763, and was, in its time, occupied by the earliest village school-teacher.

Walter Butler, with three others, received a grant from the Crown on December 31, 1735, of 4000 acres of land in the neighborhood of Johnstown. In 1743, he built the frame house known as the Butler House, still standing on Switzer Hill. This Walter Butler was a man of excellent Irish descent, and served as lieutenant in the British employ for many years.

Situated on a lofty eminence commanding a





The Ehle House, 1752

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox



magnificent view of the valley and the distant Mohawk stands this wooden relic of the storied past, built of white oak timbers, its outward-opening doors provided with half-moons, and its two trap doors in olden time enclosed in a secret passageway leading from top to bottom of the house, its huge beams, its quaint fireplace, and its small room with double doors and tiny windows, in which it is said a maniac was once confined.

A writer of the times gives us in the *Documentary History of New York* something of a picture of the valley as it was in 1757, shortly after the destruction of the Palatine's village. Some idea of the devastation of that beautiful region may be formed from the statement that eight houses, and those abandoned, were to be seen between Palatine village and the Little Falls.

From Palatine to the Little Falls, still continuing on the left bank of the Mohawk, is estimated about three leagues. In this distance there are but eight houses, which have been abandoned. The portage at Little Falls is a quarter of a league and is passed with carts.

From the portage to Colonel Johnson's mansion is twelve leagues. In the whole of this distance the soil is good. About a hundred houses are erected at a distance one from the other. The greater number of those on the bank of the river are built of stone. Those at a greater distance from the river in the interior are about half a league off; they are the new settlements and are built of wood.

There is not a fort in the whole distance of twelve leagues. There is but one house, built of stone, that is somewhat fortified and surrounded with pickets.

The above description pertains to the left or northern bank of the river. Following the right bank about one hundred houses might have been found between Indian Castle and Fort Hunter,—from Fort Hunter to Schenectady some twenty or thirty more. Schenectady contained about three hundred houses.

The Indian inhabitants of the day began to make quite a respectable showing. Many of them were attired like white men and erected frame buildings like theirs. Such a house had Niclaus Brant at Canajoharie, who owned as good a farm as many a white man and kept it cultivated as well. Mrs. Anne McVickar Grant thus describes the home of King Hendrick, of the Upper Canajoharie Castle.

The first day we came to Schenectady, a little town, situated in a rich and beautiful spot, and partly supported by the Indian trade. The next day we embarked, proceeded up the river with six bateaux, and came early in the evening to one of the most charming scenes imaginable, where Fort Hendrick was built; so called, in compliment to the principal sachem, a king of the Mohawks. The castle of this primitive monarch stood at a little distance, on a rising ground, surrounded by palisades. He resided, at the time, in a house which the public workmen, who had lately



built this fort, had been ordered to erect for him in the vicinity. We did not fail to wait upon his majesty, who, not choosing to depart too much from the customs of his ancestors, had not permitted divisions of apartments or modern furniture to profane his new dwelling. It had the appearance of a good barn, and was divided across by a mat hung in the middle. King Hendrick, who had indeed a very princely figure, and a countenance that would not have discredited royalty, was sitting on the floor beside a large heap of wheat, surrounded with baskets of berries of different kinds; beside him, his son, a very pretty boy, somewhat older than myself, was caressing a foal, which was unceremoniously introduced into the royal residence. A laced hat, a fine saddle and pistols, gifts of his good brother the great king, were hung round on the cross beams. He was splendidly arrayed in a coat of pale blue, trimmed with silver; all the rest of his dress was of the fashion of his own nation, and highly embellished with beads and other ornaments. All this suited my taste exceedingly and was level to my comprehension. I was prepared to admire King Hendrick by hearing him described as a generous warrior, terrible to his enemies and kind to his friends; the character of all others calculated to make the deepest impression on ignorant innocence, in a country where infants learned the horrors of war from its vicinity. Add to all this that the monarch smiled, clapped my head and ordered me a little basket, very pretty, and filled by the officious kindness of his son, with dried berries. Never did princely gifts, or the smile of royalty produce more ardent admiration and profound gratitude. I went out of the royal presence overcome and delighted and am not

sure but I have liked kings all my life the better for this happy specimen to which I was so early introduced. Had I seen royalty, properly such, invested with all the pomp of European magnificence, I should possibly have been confused and over-dazzled. But this was quite enough and not too much for me—and I went away, lost in a reverie, and thought of nothing but kings, battles and generals for many days after.

At about the conclusion of the last French War, Sir William came into possession of large estates, near the present Johnstown, known as the Kingsborough Patent, and consisting of twenty-six thousand acres. About 1763 he moved to Johnson Hall, which he had then just completed. There he continued to lead a life unique, combining enjoyment of nature with the courtliness and grace of the cultured man of the world. At Johnson Hall, the handsome brown "Lady Molly" reigned as mistress and her dark-eyed brood called Sir William father. Tall Indian forms darkened his doors and loitered at will in the spacious halls. To them, as Indian agent, he distributed yearly presents. He was their brother, their regularly adopted chief.

His integrity, his sagacity, his generosity, his eloquence, commanded their respect; his brotherliness won their hearts; his magnificence secured their awe, and with this he spared no pains to impress them. He drove in a coach and six to his Johnstown church, where he sat in the only canopied pew except that reserved

for his Majesty, the King, and displayed an elegant Prayer-Book. He attended the Indian councils attired and painted in barbaric magnificence, and entertained his red-skinned guests with lavish hospitality, providing the rank and file with open camps and feasting the chiefs at his board with smoking meats and tankards of ale.

The out-of-door sports most in favor were fishing, hunting, and horse-racing, and for all of these there was abundant opportunity. Athletics and games of physical skill and endurance were open not only to the white guests but to the Indians. Of these Doctor Wheelock says:

<sup>1</sup> I have seen at Mt. Johnson, also at Johnson Hall, 60-80 Indians at one time lodging under tents on the lawn and taking meals from tables made of pine-board spread under trees. They were delegations from the Iroquois tribes, come to powwow with their great, white brother.

The Indians were wont to salute Sir William with cries of "Warra! Warra!" intended as an abbreviation of his Indian title "Warragh-i-yagey" conferred upon him at the time he was made their white chief at Johnson Hall.

In December, 1764, Sir William wrote:

I have at present every room in my house full of Indians and the prospect before me of continual busi-

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Buell's *Sir William Johnson*. Copyright, 1903, by D. Appleton and Company.



ness all the winter, as the Shawnees and Delawares may be expected in a few days.

When the Indians were sleepy they rolled themselves up in blankets on the floor, or stretched themselves on pallets of fox or beaver skins.

But the same Hall that sheltered the Indians entertained other distinguished guests. Stately dames and gallant cavaliers danced and rested in the old mansion, or shared in the cultivated pleasures provided by the host. Communication with a London bookstore kept him in touch with the latest works, which graced his library. There were to be found rare and recent books and prints. Astronomy was his delight, and he revelled in botany.

Dinner took place at six, the guests being in full evening dress. The table was supplied not only with the best the valley could afford, but also with many delicacies imported from beyond the seas. Slaves waited at meals, while "Billy," the musician, coaxed sweet strains from his violin.

Among the neighbors and intimate friends of Sir William at Johnson Hall was the Butler family—John and Walter, son and grandson of Walter Butler, Senior, who had erected the Butler homestead near Switzer Hill. John Butler was a short, stout-built man, but active, courageous, and firm, somewhat rough in appearance but not unpleasing. He had a habit of speaking rapidly when excited.



The younger Butler, Walter, grew up with Sir William's son, afterward Sir John, his playmate in boyhood, his friend in later life—a handsome youth with delicate features and refined manner.

Gen. Philip Schuyler was a frequent visitor at the Hall, tall, dark, erect, of a bearing which seemed to strangers somewhat haughty, but a man withal of the greatest graciousness and kindliness of heart.

Sir John is described as having aquiline features, thin lips, cold expression, and a complexion that was blond by inheritance from his German mother and florid from over-indulgence in wine.

There was gay attire at Johnson Hall, for lords and ladies were there at times, from overseas. There were powdered wigs and silken gowns and silver buckles and all that made for the elegance and fashion of the times.

Lady Susan O'Brian, daughter of Stephen Fox, the first Earl of Ilchester, and sister of Lady Harriet Ackland, was a sprightly visitor to the Hall, in June, 1765. Then recently married to a young actor, she had displeased her family by the step,—hence her visit to the new world. That this visit was an agreeable one we learn from her delightful letters, in one of which Molly Brant is kindly alluded to as a "well-bred and pleasant lady." Lord Adam Gordon was a visitor at the same time and on his return to England took with him Sir William's son, John Johnson, for a sojourn in that country.

All alike, Indian and white man, paid courtliest respect to "Brown Lady Johnson," who filled her post with grace. Lady Molly was the daughter of the eldest sister of Caroline, her predecessor in Sir William's affections and had, herself, received a common school education. In his dealings with Indians who failed to conform easily to his point of view, the lord of the manor frequently called his "Brown Lady" to his assistance, and, he gallantly asserted, she always "mollified" them.

Says General Philip Schuyler:

<sup>1</sup> Mary Brant was a most accomplished mistress of such an establishment and her numerous flock of little half-breed Johnsons forms as interesting a family as one can see anywhere. They attend the manor school at Johnstown, and, I am told, they are among the smartest of the pupils. Sir William is exceedingly proud of them and loses no opportunity of exhibiting their graces and acquirements to his guests. He intends to send his two half-breed boys to the New King's College in New York and the girls he will educate as they grow up in Mrs. Pardee's School for Young Ladies at Albany.

The out-of-door sports most in favor for the entertainment of guests were fishing, hunting, driving, horse-racing, and contests of strength and skill. The games were open to white men and red

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Buell's *Sir William Johnson*. Copyright, 1903, by D. Appleton and Company.

alike, and small prizes were given as rewards of success.

He established, moreover, at Broadalbin a handsome summer house, to which, by way of variety, he gave welcome to his guests. On the south bank of Sacandaga Creek, about fourteen miles to the north, he also built a taut little cottage known as the "Fish House," a pretty one-story lodge painted white with green shutters.

Here parties of ladies and gentlemen spent their days in baiting the finny game, and in the fall the gentlemen tried their guns on the water-fowl.

Spring, summer,\* and fall were the visiting months at Johnson Hall, the guests being from all along the valley—from Albany, New York and from across the seas. The gardener kept the grounds exquisitely neat and luxuriant in bloom. The finest blooded stock, the choicest seeds imported from London,—these had come to the baronet's stables and orchards, and now furnished their quota to the entertainment of his guests.

A dozen slaves, attired like Indians, save that they wore coats, lived in wooden cabins across the Cayudetta. Across the road stood the homes of the blacksmith and tailor.

The visitor to Johnson Hall to-day will find the historic building situated on a gently rising eminence on the bank of the Cayudetta. Where the ground gradually begins to slope from the level, is found located a fine marble statue of the



baronet on a commanding pedestal. As we cross the quiet plain we pass over the spot on which the Indians once were wont to encamp, and on the right is "the brook" to which the squaws carried their papooses to be washed. Entering the grounds we see the fallen remnants of an ancient poplar or two, and a stone block-house, still standing, one of the two of long ago.

Two stories high, the building is clapboarded to represent stone. Vast and elegant the mansion was for the day it was built, with its large wainscoted rooms, great halls, and broad staircase. On the balustrade may be seen the hatchet marks of Joseph Brant when, in a fit of anger, it is said, at Sir John, he defaced the railing at every step.

Many a relic of the past may now be seen at the mansion—Sir William's cane, the ledger in which, in his own clear hand, are inscribed the names of his tenants, a little half-worn shoe belonging to one of his half-breed children, a great Indian tomahawk, and a lovely painting of Lady McLeod, who, with her husband, was sometimes a visitor at Johnson Hall.

About the year 1770, Johnstown had grown to be quite a thriving village of five hundred people and one hundred dwellings, with a chapel, a yellow schoolhouse, and a few stores and shops. The land on which it was situated belonged to the Kingsborough Patent, granted in 1753 to Arent Stevens "and others," of whom Johnson would seem to have been one. To the one hundred or



more families to whom portions of this had been leased or sold, he added, in 1773, a body of six hundred Scotch Highland kinsmen, all Roman Catholics, all firm adherents of himself and, in later days, of his family.

Meanwhile, the baronet had already built, at the corner of the present William and Main streets, the little, long, yellow building for the children of Molly Brant, to which any were welcome, little Indians and all. In 1771, he advertised in the New York papers for a person "proficient" in reading, writing, and arithmetic. An Irishman named Wall was chosen who "spared not the rod." He taught the children incidentally to bow and scrape, to say "good morning," and to be polite. In front of the schoolhouse, by way of warning, stood the stocks and whipping-post.

At Canajoharie Castle, as early at 1764, there was established an Indian school, taught by an Indian, Philip Jonathan. In the German settlements generally, the early schools were taught in the German tongue. The education of Sir John was confided to the care of Dominie Vrooman and other clergymen, and to these reverend gentlemen, the Dutch dominies of the day, many of the more eminent of our Mohawk Valley forefathers doubtless owed such superiority of attainment in learning as they possessed.

Gilbert Tice was an innkeeper at Johnstown during the baronet's time, but the story goes that no traveller of note was allowed to spend a

night there, Sir William entertaining such guests invariably at his stately home.

Gosen Van Alstyne, also regaled travellers in the fine, stone mansion on Scramling's Kill, the present Canajoharie Creek.

Mr. Richard Smith, who passed through the valley in May, 1769, was entertained by a Mr. Clench, of Schenectady and spoke favorably of both landlord and inn.

In 1766, Sir William built for his daughter Mary and her husband, his nephew, a fine wooden building known as Guy Park. Having been, it is said, destroyed by lightning, it was afterward rebuilt of limestone. Wide piazzas at front and rear, deep alcoved windows, wide halls and stairways, and large cheerful rooms rendered this a very attractive home, surrounded with the solemn woods and with the romantic Mohawk for a background. For his daughter Nancy and her husband, Colonel Claus, he built another mansion which was situated somewhat east of Fort Johnson, and was burned during the Revolution. To each of these houses were attached some six hundred and forty acres of surrounding land. Sir John occupied Fort Johnson from the time of his father's removal to Johnson Hall. Of the half-breed children of Caroline, King Hendrick's niece, William, known as "William of Canajoharie," did not live at Johnson Hall, but with his uncle "Little Abe," at Canajoharie Castle. The older daughter, Charlotte, afterward married



Johnson Hall, 1763

Photograph by Everett J. Hall





Henry Randall, at first of the king's service but later of our own. The younger of the two daughters, Caroline, is believed to have married Walter N. Butler.

Sir John Johnson married in 1773, the "lovely Polly Watts," daughter of John Watts, of New York, a young lady of amiability and social distinction. The happy pair enjoyed a week-long trip up the romantic Hudson when it was a wilder river than it is now, clothed in luxuriant verdure. At Albany and Schenectady they were fêted and entertained, and completed the journey at last by bateau to the gloomy, grand old mansion, Fort Johnson, which was to be their home. Previous to his marriage, Sir John had discarded Miss Claire Putnam, a beautiful woman, of good Mohawk Valley descent, with whom he had hitherto lived as his wife, and who now, with her children, took refuge in Canada.

Once more the scene was about to change. Already the shadow of the war that was to come was resting upon the nation. Distracted by his love for his neighbors, the Palatine and Low Dutch settlers of the valley, and his loyalty to the Crown, Sir William was not at rest. He is quoted as having given utterance in July, 1774, to the following speech:

<sup>1</sup>All this trouble must lead to blows before long. A

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Buell's *Sir William Johnson*. Copyright, 1903, by D. Appleton and Company.

serious collision may happen any day now. The Colonists cannot retreat, and the King, apparently, will not. I am filled with forebodings. I dread the coming of a struggle that must shake the British Empire to its foundations. For my part I can only say now that I shall not be found on the side of the aggressor.

For some years his health had been slowly failing. Anxiety now preyed upon his mind. Many a time had his restraining hand been upon the red men of the valley to prevent an outbreak against the whites. Recent injuries done his allies in the South, atrocities committed by unscrupulous pale-faces, had raised the seething spirits of the outraged savages to the boiling point. Sir William gave them audience on Saturday, July 9, 1774. He replied in the burning style of Indian eloquence on the following Monday, urging them to patience and promising justice. The pipes were smoked, the wampum belts were given, and the answer on their part was promised for the following day. Stricken with the burning heat through which, for two hours, he had been speaking, Sir William became sick unto death, exclaiming to Joseph Brant, who helped to carry him into the Hall:

<sup>1</sup> "Joseph, control your people! Control your people! I am going away!"

Shortly after he passed from earth.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Buell's *Sir William Johnson*. Copyright, 1903, by D. Appleton and Company.

Hastily summoned, Sir John Johnson galloped from his home at Fort Johnson in hot haste to the bedside of his dying father, the first horse he mounted dropping dead on the way. But he was too late.

Mourned by all who knew him, the body of the baronet was presently laid to rest beneath the altar in his Johnstown church. He provided liberally for all those nearest him in blood, Sir John receiving far the largest share. This clause of his will is characteristic of the man:

I do earnestly recommend my son to show lenity to such of my tenants as are poor and an upright conduct to all mankind which will on reflection afford more satisfaction to a noble and generous mind than greatest opulence.

A great man had been laid to rest and in his place now reigned his son. The days of Sir William were at an end.

## CHAPTER VII

### RIFLE AND TOMAHAWK

"An officer in the gallery leaned over the edge, waving his gold-laced hat.

" 'God save the King!' he roared, and many answered, 'God save the King!' but that shout was drowned by a thundering outburst of cheers: 'God save our country! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!'"

CARDIGAN.

The national debt of Great Britain, greatly increased through the war with France, and now amounting to nearly three hundred and twenty millions of dollars, hung heavily over the government at home. The mother country taxed her American colonies to help support the weight. In England there were not wanting noble minds to sympathize with America and eloquent tongues were there to plead her cause.

The first bill of this character, imposing duty on clayed sugar, indigo, etc., was passed in 1764. In the same year a resolution laying certain stamp duties upon the colonies was brought to the front to be acted upon at the next meeting of Parliament. The colonies now took every means of expressing



disapproval. Nevertheless, in March, 1765, the bill came before the House of Commons. Charles Townsend, in its favor, said:

And now will these Americans, children planted by our care, nourished by our indulgences till they are grown to a degree of strength and opulence, and protected by our arms, will they grudge to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy weight of that burden which we lie under?

To which Colonel Barre eloquently replied, in part:

They planted by your care? No. Your oppressions planted them in America. They fled from your tyranny into a then uncultivated land where they were exposed to all the hardships to which human nature is liable, and among others to the cruelties of a savage foe, the most subtle and, I will take it upon me to say, the most terrible that ever inhabited any part of God's earth.

. . . . .  
They nourished by your indulgence? They grew up by your neglect of them. . . .

They protected by your arms? They have nobly taken up arms in your defense. . . .

On the 1st day of November, 1765, the Stamp Act took effect. It was a day of mourning throughout the land. The dirge was tolled in Boston and workshops there were closed, while the friends of Liberty at Portsmouth were in-

vited to her funeral, which was held in effigy. From this time dated the formation of societies of the "Sons of Liberty" throughout the land. English luxuries were everywhere eschewed, and homespun became popular.

This intense excitement in America caused some alarm in England and finally resulted in the repeal of the Stamp Act, followed, however, by the "Declaratory Act" to the effect "that Parliament have and of right ought to have, power to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever," and closely followed, in *its* turn, by a tax on glass, tea, etc. At the same time there still remained on the statutes a law requiring that any British troops sent to America should be quartered there at the expense of the colonies.

These arbitrary measures kept indignation at fever heat. Joy over the repeal of the Stamp Act was short-lived. The home government now felt the need of action, and, in 1768, British troops were quartered in Boston and New York.

Massachusetts addressed a circular letter to the other colonies asking their advice and support. In Virginia, the House of Burgesses met behind closed doors and adopted resolutions condemning the injustice of the British government in transporting criminals for trial.

The first American blood shed in the cause was spilled at Boston on March 2, 1770, when British soldiers, having long been derided and dared, fired upon the people, wounding five and killing

three. The funeral of these martyrs was held three days later, with every demonstration of sorrow and respect, thousands following the bodies to the grave.

In 1772, a British revenue cutter, the *Gaspee*, was burned near Providence.

Again, in 1773, did Virginia register her protest against tyranny. The voice of Patrick Henry, exclaiming in ringing tones for *liberty or death*, was now vibrant throughout the South, while Philadelphia found for the spirit of that same liberty a worthy champion in Benjamin Franklin.

The East India Company obtained permission to import to America that unpopular article—tea. Ship after ship was sent back, unloaded, from New York and Philadelphia. The Governor of Massachusetts, however, permitted the tea to land at Boston. The people, indignant, assembled, and finally, on the evening of December 17th, the famous Boston Tea Party was held, at which time some thirty men, in Mohawk Indian attire, under the protection of their fellow citizens, broke open and consigned to the bosom of the deep, three hundred and forty-two chests of tea.

"Disperse, ye rebels,—throw down your arms and disperse!" These were the words of Major Pitcairn, addressed to a small company of militia assembled at the village of Lexington, April 19, 1775. The militia wavered, they received the enemy's fire, and eight were killed. This feeble resistance overcome, the British detachment

moved on to Concord and there destroyed some military stores laid up by the Americans, meeting but small resistance from the militia. But the firing had been reported,—bells rang, guns were discharged, and the country was in arms. Stone walls and tree-stumps were alive with men. Flames were pouring forth into the ranks of the now retreating British.

A large army under command of Generals Ward and Putnam soon surrounded Boston town.

There followed the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain boys and their associates from Connecticut.

Again, on June 17th, came the historic battle of Bunker Hill, in which the immortal *Warren* lost his life—in which the Briton tested the mettle of his enemy, and gained what he called a victory at a price all too high to pay. On the 4th of July, 1776, the Continental Congress, assembled at Philadelphia, declared the independence of the United States.

Meanwhile, the intrepid men of New England were not alone in their fight for the cause. While stirring events had transpired elsewhere, what part had been taken by the men of the county of Tryon, colony of New York? Let the opening part of the minutes of the Committee of Safety be our reply.

#### COUNTY OF TRYON:

WHEREAS the British Parliament has lately passed an Act for raising a Revenue in America without the



Consent of our Representative to abridging the Liberties and privileges of the American Colonies and therefore blocking up the Port of Boston; the Freeholders and Inhabitants of Palatine Dist, in the County of Tryon aforesaid, looking with Concern and heartfull Sorrow on these Allarming and calamitous Conditions, Do meet this 27th Day of August 1774, on that purpose at the house of Adam Loucks Esq<sup>r</sup> at Stonearabia, and conclude the Resolves following: Vizt

I.) That King George the Third is Lawful and Rightful Lord and Sovereign of Great Britain and the Dominions thereto belonging and that as Part of his Dominions We hereby testify that We will bear true Faith and Allegiance unto him, and that we will with our Lives and Fortunes support and maintain him upon the Throne of His Ancestors and the just Dependence of these his Colonies upon the Crown of Great Britain.—

II.) That we think and consider it as our greatest Happiness to be governed by the Laws of Great Britain, and that with Chearfulness We will always pay Submission thereunto, as far as we consistently can, with the Security of the Constitutional Rights and Liberties of English Subjects, which are so sacred, that we cannot permit the same to be violated.—

III.) That We think it is our undeniable Privilege to be taxed only with our own Consent given by ourselves (or by our Representative). That Taxes otherwise laid and exacted are unjust and unconstitutional. That the Late Acts of Parliament declarative of their Right of laying internal Taxes on the American Colonies are obvious Incroachment in the Rights and Liberties of the British Subjects in America.—

IV.) That the Act for blocking up the Port of Boston is oppressive and arbitrary, injurious in its principles and particularly oppressive to the Inhabitants of Boston, who we consider as Brethren suffering in the Common Cause.

V.) That We will unite and join with the different Districts of this County, in giving whatever Relief it is in our power to the poor distressed Inhabitants of Boston, and that we will join and unite with our Brethren of the Rest of this Colony in anything tending to support and defend our Rights and Liberties.—

At another meeting, of date the following May, 1775, the Freeholders gave utterance to the following sentiment:

Whereas the Grand Jury of this County, and a Number of the Magistrates have signed a Declaration declaring their Disapprobation of the just Opposition made by the Colonies of the oppressive and arbitrary Acts of the British Parliament, the purport of which is evidently to entail Slavery on America—And as the said Declaration may in some measures be looked upon as the Sense of the County in General, if the same be passed over in Silence:—We the Subscribers Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Said County, inspired with a sincere Love for our Country and deeply interested in the Common Cause, Do Solemnly Declare our fixed Attachment to and entire Approbation of the proceedings of the Grand Continental Congress held at Philadelphia last Fall and that We will strictly adhere and abide by the same. We do also solemnly declare and express our Confidence in the Wisdom and Integrity of the present Continental

Congress, and that We will support the same to the utmost of our power, and that we will Religiously and inviolably observe the Regulations and proceedings of that August Body.—

And in the ringing words of May 19th of that same year, they added:

In a word Gentl<sup>n</sup> it is our fixed Resolution to support and carry into Execution everything Recommended by the Continental and provincial Congress, and to be free, or die.

And again, on May 21st, they resolved:

That as we abhor\* a State of Slavery, We do join and unite together under all the ties of Religion, Honor, Justice and Love for our Country never to become Slaves, and to defend our Freedom with our Lives and Fortunes.

During this same month of May, 1775, when the blood of the Whigs was running dangerously riot, a body of them, several hundred in number, had assembled at Caughnawaga with a view to erecting a liberty pole. Sir John Johnson and Sir Guy, his brother-in-law and cousin, attempted to break up the meeting, Sir Guy making a speech so offensive as to arouse belligerent blood. Thereupon one Jacob Sammons, fired with indignation, used epithets anything but complimentary to the speaker. From words they came to blows and Sir Guy receiving some help from Loyalist friends, it fell to the lot of the same Sammons to bear honor-

able scars—the first of Tryon County in connection with the Revolutionary War.

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Committee was held on June 2, 1775. On that occasion a letter was written to Sir Guy Johnson protesting against some of his measures, such as the keeping of an armed guard about him and the searching of travellers on the highway.

To this Sir Guy presently replied, disclaiming any discreditable intentions.

On August 26, 1775, was organized the Tryon County Militia.

At the twenty-seventh meeting a letter was framed and afterward sent to Sir John Johnson.

TRYON CO. COMMITTEE CHAMBERS.

Oct. 26, 1775.

HONORABLE SIR:

As we find particular reason to be convinced of your opinion in the questions hereafter expressed, we request that you will oblige us with your sentiments thereof in a few lines by our messengers, the bearers hereof, Messrs. Ebenezer Cox, James McMaster and Jacob J. Clock, members of our Committee. We wish to know whether you will allow the inhabitants of Johnstown and Kingsborough to form themselves into companies, according to the regulations of our Continental Congress, for the defense of our country's cause; and whether your Honor would be ready himself to give his personal assistance to the same purpose; also whether you pretend a prerogative to



our County Court House and Jail and would hinder or interrupt the Committee making use of the same to our want and service in the common cause. We do not doubt you will comply with our reasonable request and thereby oblige

Honorable Sir,

Your obedient and humble servants,

By order of the Committee,

NICHOLAS HERKIMER, *Chairman.*

To this Sir John replied that as to embodying his tenants, he never did nor should forbid them; but they might save themselves further trouble, as he knew his tenants would not consent. Concerning himself, sooner than lift his hand against his king, or sign any association, he would suffer his head to be cut off. As to the court-house and jail, he would not deny the use of them for the purpose for which they were built, but that they were his property until he should be refunded seven hundred pounds. He further said that he had been informed that two thirds of the Canajoharie and German Flats people had been forced to sign the association.

The distinction between Whig and Tory began now to stand out in bold relief. Tories were plenty in the valley and the question of loyalty and rebellion furnished a line of cleavage for dividing families. In this respect the minutes of the Committee are a faithful mirror of the times.

The Schenectady Committee was meanwhile doing work as effective, regulating the cost of

provisions and supplies, purchasing from private individuals any stores of ammunition in their possession, and otherwise preparing wisely for future need.

The committee minutes for December 29, 1775, contain the following entry:

This board having taken into consideration the custom of the inhabitants of this place of firing guns on New Year's day, and finding said custom to be attended with an unnecessary waste of powder, which ought to be particularly prevented at this time;

Resolved that the Magistrates be applied to, to use their authority in putting a stop to said customs.

The stand taken by Sir John Johnson was a source of increasing uneasiness to the colonists and at the beginning of 1776 it seemed best to take more definite action in the matter. Colonels Guy Johnson and John Butler were now in Canada, and very well posted in matters at Johnson Hall and vicinity, the Indians conveying correspondence, it is said, in personal ornaments and tomahawk heads.

In January of that year, General Schuyler, with seven hundred men, left Albany to help Sir John in arriving at a decision. A messenger was sent forward to reassure the Indians, but the Indians were disposed to resent any action against Sir John, whom they loved more for his father's sake than for his own. After meeting Little Abram and a delegation of his Mohawks at

Schenectady and a considerable exchange of argument, during which General Schuyler more fully explained to them his wish merely to know Sir John's mind, and his desire for peace, if possible, he sent, with their approval, a message to Johnson Hall. His terms were that all military stores should be given up, that Sir John, on his parole, remain in any part of Tryon County—east of Kingsland—that he might choose, that the Scotch inhabitants give up their arms, that all articles intended for presents to the Indians be given up.

Sir John hesitated. General Schuyler threatened violence and<sup>r</sup> was reinforced by General Herkimer, with Tryon County militia, the whole army numbering about three thousand men.

Sir John's answer was indefinite and unsatisfactory, but, after further parley, an agreement was reached practically in accordance with General Schuyler's propositions. On the 19th, Sir John's retainers grounded their arms. Within a day or two about one hundred Tories were captured. General Schuyler then returned to Albany.

Sir John's conduct was not greatly changed after this transaction. Tories still visited the vicinity, and Sir John is said to have broken his parole. In May, Col. Elias Dayton was sent by Schuyler to arrest him, but Sir John, forewarned, had departed in the night, hastily, and poorly provisioned, with a large party of his retainers.

After much hardship, they reached Montreal at the end of a journey of nineteen days.

There was now coming to the front that feature in the great struggle for independence that brought the most terrific suffering into the lives of the people of the beautiful valleys of the Wyoming and the Mohawk. That great friend of white man and Indian alike who had guided and restrained the savage tomahawk, holding it ever back from its destructive blows against the settlements of the frontier, had passed away. Sir William Johnson was dead; Sir John, his son, reigned in his stead.

The Crown and its Loyalists did not hesitate to use the red man, untutored and unrestrained, as their terror-bringing ally. They had a right, they said, "to use all the means that God and nature had put into their hands to conquer America." To not a few citizens of England, to not a few of their officers quartered upon American soil, this course aroused the repugnance which it deserved.

Said Lord Pitt, at debate in the British Parliament, when first the measure was introduced:

My Lords, we are called upon as members of this house, as men, as Christian men, to protest against such notions, standing near the throne, polluting the ear of Majesty. "That God and nature put into our hands!" I know not what ideas that Lord may entertain of God and nature, but I know that such



abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity.

What! to attribute the sanction of God and nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping-knife! to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, roasting and eating, literally, my lords, eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles!

I call upon that right reverend bench, those holy ministers of the gospel and pious pastors of the church; I conjure them to join in the holy work and vindicate the religion of their God. I appeal to the wisdom and the law of this learned bench to defend and support the justice of their country. I call upon the bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn; upon the learned judges to interpose the purity of their ermine to save us from this pollution. I call upon the honor of your lordships to reverence the dignity of your ancestors and to maintain your own. I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country to vindicate the national character.

The Oneida Indians, as a tribe, remained neutral or friendly to the American cause, incurring thereby some suffering at the hands of the indignant Mohawks. The course of the Oneidas in this respect was due, no doubt, largely to the beneficent influence and wise counsel of their missionary, Rev. Samuel Kirkland, and of the celebrated chief Skenandoah, the "white man's friend."

Joseph Brant early began to exert his influence over his tribesmen in the interest of Great Britain. On the 27th of June, 1777, General Herkimer,

accompanied by a number of the militia, met the chief at Unadilla. In a somewhat stormy interview, which at one time seemed likely to end in bloodshed, Brant declared himself under allegiance to the king. He said, further, that as he and the General were old friends, the latter would be permitted to depart for his own home in peace.

Red-skinned foes now prowled in the woods about Fort Stanwix, and occasionally claimed a victim. On the 28th of July, three young girls out picking berries were shot, and two of them were tomahawked and scalped. There was no room for doubt on which side the red men stood arrayed. As to what part the Loyalists took in these matters, the following document will attest.

The Bearer Schoyghoowate, a young Cayuga chief, has been on a scouting party in Ft. Stanwix in the Beginning of July '77, where 5 prisoners 4 scalps were taken and has not rec'd any Reward for such Service, this is therefore to certify that I shall see him content for Said Service on my first seeing him again.

Buck Island, 9th July, '77.

DAN CLAUS,  
*Superintendent Western Division.*

This may certify that Kay-ing-wam-to, the Sanake (Seneca) chief, has been on an expedition to Fort Stanwix, and has taken two scalps, one from an officer and a corporal that were gunning near the fort, for

which I promise to pay at sight ten dollars for each scalp.

JOHN BUTLER,  
*Col. and Supt. of the Six Nations and  
the allies of his Majesty.*

Given under my hand at  
Bucks Island.

The men of the valley watched the progress of the war, so often discouraging, as it was waged elsewhere, and every now and then a new recruit found his way to Canada, while the patriots awaited the day for the Canadian army, under the Johnsons, to return upon them. It came at last. The half-breed interpreter, Thomas Spencer, brought the news, and Oneida runners verified it.

It was the summer of 1777. Sir Henry Clinton was stationed at the south, at Hudson River, to march to the north; Burgoyne, at Fort Edward, at the northeast, to march southwestwardly; St. Leger at the northwest, with his Canadian and Indian allies, to march southeastwardly,—all three to meet at Albany, and cut off New England from the Middle States,—this was the British plan of action. But it failed. So far as St. Leger's part was concerned, the path lay through the Mohawk Valley, with no obstacle in the way, save a weak garrison at Fort Stanwix, which he had already reached and was now besieging. Yes, there was another obstacle—the yeomanry of the valley who opposed his march and closed in battle with him on the field of Oriskany.

On the 17th of July the following proclamation was issued by General Herkimer:

Whereas it appears certain that the enemy, of about 2,000 strong, Christians and savages, are arriving at Oswego with the intention to invade our frontiers, I think it proper and most necessary for the defense of our country, and it shall be ordered by me as the enemy approaches that every male person being in health from sixteen to sixty years of age, in this our county, shall, as in duty bound, repair immediately with arms and accoutrements to the place to be appointed in my orders, and will then march to oppose the enemy with vigor, as true patriots, for the just defense of their country. And those that are above sixty years or really unwell and incapable to march, shall then assemble, also armed, at their respective places, where women and children will be gathered together, in order for defense against the enemy, if attacked, as much as lies in their power. But concerning the disaffected, and who will not directly obey such orders, they shall be taken along with their arms, secured under guard, to join the main body. And as such an invasion requires every friend to the country in general, but of this county in particular, to show his zeal and well affected spirit in actual defense of the same, all the members of the committee as well as those who by former commissions or otherwise have been exempted from any other military duty, are requested to repair also when called, to such place as shall be appointed and join to repulse our foes. Not doubting that the Almighty Power, upon our humble prayers and sincere trust in him,



will then graciously succor our arms in battle, for our just cause, and victory can not fail on our side.

The time was August, 1777. The proclamation issued by General Herkimer had been sent forth, summoning the peaceful yeomanry to arms. The air was full of forebodings. Royal sympathizers lived among the patriots, their neighbors, relatives, and close associates. The issue was uncertain. On the conquest of Fort Stanwix and the junction of the three loyalist forces, the British would hold the key to the situation and cut off the armies of New York and New England from the armies of the South.

It was a lovely region, the one whose devastation was threatened, the admiration of beauty lovers, the charming valley of the Mohawk.

Fort Stanwix lay besieged. This defence, the old Fort Schuyler of history, stood on the right bank of the Mohawk River, at the head of its navigation. To the west was Wood Creek, connecting with Oneida Lake and the Oneida River which with Oswego River, form a chain of waters to Lake Ontario. Between Wood Creek and the Mohawk was the carrying place for boats, hence the importance of the location of the fort.

Inside its walls were stationed seven hundred and fifty Continental troops,—New York and Massachusetts,—under the charge of Colonel Gansevoort. In front were arrayed against it 1700 men, white men and Indians, British and Tories. St. Leger

was in command and the savage contingent was led by the terrible Brant. By night the red man's war-whoop resounded through the woods.

A few miles away, on the site of the present town of Herkimer, then Fort Dayton, stood another body of soldiers. Commanded by Gen. Nicholas Herkimer, the militia of Tryon County stood ready marshalled for the relief of the besieged. On August 4th, they left Fort Dayton and advanced to Whitestown, where they made a halt.

On the evening of August 5th, messengers were dispatched from the vicinity of the present Whitestown to Fort Stanwix to notify the commander of the proximity of the regiment. Gansevoort was to fire three signal-guns on receipt of the news. The messengers did not reach the fort until late the next morning, at which time signals were promptly given, and Colonel Willett, with 250 New York Continentals, issued from the fort.

At daybreak that morning, the 800 militia were ready for the fray. There stood the men of the Mohawk. Scotch-Irish, brave men! were there, and men of New England blood, but, for the most part, German and Low Dutch. German was the language chiefly spoken on that eventful day. Fathers and sons fought side by side, brothers and brothers, young and old.

The central figure, toward whom all eyes were turned, was a small spare man of forty-eight with black hair and bright black eyes. As the multi-

tude, at first serious and patient, begin to take alarm, as no signal is heard and the waiting army is not yet in line of march, let us look particularly at this man, their leader, Gen. Nicholas Herkimer.

John Jost Herkimer, the father of our hero, a Lutheran by religious profession, was one of the earlier settlers of the German Flats. To the family of which he was a member had been assigned extensive grants of land. John Jost drew for his share a lot on the south side of the river. Here his eldest son, Nicholas, was born, soon after his father's arrival in this country. In a near-by school, the lad received what little education ever fell to his share, that little being in the German tongue.

His father was prominent in the neighborhood, influential and wealthy. In later years he built again, his house being situated about three quarters of a mile from the site of his first residence, afterward Fort Herkimer, and directly opposite Fort Dayton. He died many years before the battle in which his son bore so noble a part.

Nicholas, like his father, was influential and prosperous. As has been said, he had not had the advantages of a liberal education, but he was pure, honest, honorable, courageous, and generally beloved. He stood sponsor for many children and was affectionately known among his neighbors as "Hannicol" Herkimer.

General Herkimer had eight sisters, all married, but the husbands of several were Tories. Others



among his relatives were also suspected of Toryward leanings and one of his brothers was a leading Loyalist. The other brother was with him in the battle in which he met his death.

But the sun has mounted high into the sky. There is discontent in the army. The signal has not been heard. The ranks are not on the move. For hours, the patriot band has been in readiness, eager for the word of command. There have long been low murmurings, here and there.

The murmurings have become more intense. Is there treachery in the air? This commander, so loth to advance, is he a coward at heart? He has a brother known as a traitor. Is he one as well? The colonels remonstrate with their general. He replies calmly that prudence demands delay. The signal has not yet been given. They urge. He holds his ground. The people catch the spirit of the hour. The ranks become tumultuous; the excitement grows intense.

"Ye who are so eager will be the first to fly," is the remark of Herkimer. But the men are not quieted. The discontent grows apace, the surging of the army is like that of the billows of the sea. Again the leaders remonstrate. They speak curtly and with some contempt. "Coward!" "Traitor!" These are words that reach his ear.

The General turns his face toward them. They have touched a sensitive spot. He leaps upon a stump and gives the word of command.





Monument of Oriskany

Photograph by A. P. Zintsmaster



"Vorwardts!" cries Herkimer, and brandishes his sword.

The men break into a huzza. The march begins, through ravine and woods,—when suddenly the scene changes. The Indians and British have been apprised, and lie in ambush to surround their prey. The fierce nature of the wild man of the forest has been aroused. He does not wait, as has been planned, for all the advancing army to pass. He closes upon the first. There are savage war-whoops and the battle has begun.

The conflict thickens. Side by side fight fathers and sons, elder brothers and younger; their foes,—their neighbors and the savage natives of the soil. Manfully did the yeomanry perform their part. Said Gouverneur Morris, in his speech before the New York Historical Society:

Let me recall, gentlemen, to your recollection the bloody field on which Herkimer fell. There was found the Indian and the white man, born on the banks of the Mohawk, their left hands clutched in each other's hair, the right hand grasping, in a gripe of death, the knife plunged in each other's bosom; thus they lay frowning.

As men who fight for home and child and wife,  
As men oblivious of life,  
In holy martyrdom,  
The Yeomen of the Valley fought that day,  
Throughout thy fierce and deadly fray,  
Blood-red Oriskany.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From a poem composed by Rev. Charles Downes Helmer, D.D.

In the midst of the deadly confusion, there sounded the long-expected signal,—the three guns from the fort. At the same moment, there issued from it, not too late to help, Colonel Willett with his two hundred and fifty men.

Meanwhile where is the central figure?—a majestic one, indeed. His horse has been shot beneath him, his leg lies shattered by his side, but he sits yonder, at the foot of a large tree, propped against it, setting his men an example of self-possession in danger and of bravery under pain, as he calmly smokes his pipe.

Heroes are born in such a chosen hour;  
O'er common men they rise and tower;  
Like thee, brave Herkimer!  
Who wounded, steedless, still beside the beech  
Cheered on thy men, with sword and speech,  
In grim Oriskany.<sup>1</sup>

A thunder-storm interposes and the war of the elements affords breathing-space to the contending armies. Then the storm subsides, and the human conflict rages once more. For five hours it endures, then comes the cry of "Oonah! Oonah!" the retreating war-signal of the fleeing Indians who have had enough of battle; leaving the patriots in possession of the field.

While the wounded were being carried from the scene of battle, a litter was formed for the wounded hero, Herkimer. Under an escort of men

<sup>1</sup> Poem of Rev. Charles D. Helmer, D.D.



commanded by his brother-in-law, Captain Bell, he was borne for thirty miles, to his home. There it was that after days of patient suffering he yielded up his life. When told that the end was near, he asked for his Bible, and read aloud, in steady tones, the 38th Psalm, so applicable to himself. Thus did the hero of the battle-field prove himself the hero of the dying-room as well—a Christian hero.

The slaughter had been bloody. Both sides claimed the victory. But one thing is certain, that the men of the Mohawk bought with their blood the honor of giving at the critical point the needed check to the army of the invader that penned St. Leger before Fort Stanwix and checked his triumphant advance. It forged the first link in the chain of events which led to the victory at Saratoga and the surrender of Burgoyne. It held the Tory sympathizers in awe and thus subdued that dangerous element of the population. The people of the neighborhood have long had occasion to feel an exultant pride in the conquest of the terrible Iroquois, themselves conquerors of the kindred nations of their dauntless race. The Indians thenceforth regarded the peaceful settlers with fear and gave utterance to their rooted intention never to fight the "Dutch Yankees" any more.

The battle-ground of Oriskany that day responded to the tread of many heroes who risked their lives or surrendered them in defence of their

country, their beautiful valley, their families, and their homes. Obscure heroes, it may be, none the less brave for that, thrifty, brawny heroes, who tilled the soil with implements of peace, then marched, un-uniformed to defend it, with implements of war.

It is hard to refrain from describing the tragic details of the battle or from quoting the eulogies passed upon it by many famous men. Some day it will be awarded its proper place in the nation's annals. Let us at least say that, in the words of the late Hon Robert Earl:

Our National flag was adopted by the Continental Congress on the fourth of June, 1777, and was first flung to the breeze at Fort Stanwix on the sixth of August, 1777,—the day of the Oriskany battle. It was extemporized out of a white shirt, an old blue jacket and some strips of red cloth from the petticoat of a soldier's wife, and was defiantly displayed in the face of the beleaguering army of St. Leger, with the English flag beneath it. It was the first time any British soldier had seen the flag.

Thus said Hamilton Fish:

Compared with other battles, in the consideration of the forces engaged, the Battle of Oriskany was a very insignificant affair, but it involved skill, courage and endurance, and, in its results, is to be regarded as one of the important successes in the great struggle which brought a nation into recognized existence.

Said Benson J. Lossing, the historian:

I turned from that battle-field, and in contemplating its far-reaching effects upon the campaign in northern New York in 1777, was satisfied that it was the chief event that caused the Indians to desert St. Leger, and that boastful young leader to raise the siege of Fort Stanwix and fly for refuge to the bosom of Lake Ontario. It was the first fatal shock given to the hopes of Burgoyne, and caused him to despair when his expedition toward Bennington was defeated ten days after the Battle of Oriskany.

The events at Oriskany and Bennington, in August, 1777, caused the flood-tide of invasion from the north to ebb. They led immediately to the important results at Saratoga in October; also the appreciation by the courts of Europe of the powers of the American soldiery and the ability of the colonists to maintain the cause of independence. They led to an open treaty of alliance between the United States and France which was signed just six months to a day after the Battle of Oriskany. That battle was the first upon which the fortunes of the old war for independence turned in favor of the American patriots. It was the prophecy of the surrender of Yorktown.

We have, moreover, the declaration of Washington himself that "when all was dark in the north, it was Herkimer who first reversed the gloomy scene."

To quote Lieutenant-Governor Dorsheimer in his speech at the centennial celebration of the little fight:

Herkimer and his men were ambushed by the

Indians. That was a favorite device in Indian warfare, but it did not succeed with these sturdy Germans. Most, although simple farmers without military training, not only stood their ground, but quickly adapted themselves to the occasion, adopted the Indian tactics, posted themselves behind trees, and fought with such skill and endurance all through the summer day that the Indians, to use the language of one of their chiefs, had enough, and did not want to fight "Dutch Yankees" any more.

No more important battle has ever been fought in this country. Nowhere, with an opportunity for escape, have troops sustained so severe a loss, never has a battle which began with disaster been turned into victory more complete. And this was a German fight. The words of warning and encouragement, the exclamations of passion and of pain, the shouts of battle and of victory and the commands which the wounded Herkimer spake, and the prayers of the dying, were in the German tongue. I say you may well be proud of it, for it is the contribution which men of your race have made to the work of American independence.

On August 6, 1877, the anniversary of that memorable day, central New York witnessed an imposing scene. The grounds, one hundred years before so dark and gloomy, the home of ancient forests, were transformed into vistas of peaceful life and the descendants of the heroes of the battle and the descendants of their neighbors and friends, with later settlers of the valley, thronged the historic grounds and recalled the memory of



the earnest soldiers of Oriskany. With music and flags, speeches and poems in their honor, the day was spent. Ten years later, a similar body gathered on the spot and there, fair to the sight, stood the statue they had come to dedicate, the Monument of Oriskany.

The names of the patriots of the battle bear an honored place upon a tablet on one of its sides. Tablets on the other sides give, respectively, views of the struggle between an Indian and a white man, and of the wounded Herkimer directing the conflict. The remaining side bears the dedication:

HERE WAS FOUGHT  
THE BATTLE OF ORISKANY,  
ON THE 6TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1777.  
HERE BRITISH INVASION WAS CHECKED AND  
THWARTED.

HERE GENERAL NICHOLAS HERKIMER,  
INTREPID LEADER OF THE AMERICAN FORCES,  
THOUGH MORTALLY WOUNDED KEPT COMMAND OF  
THE FIGHT  
TILL THE ENEMY HAD FLED.  
THE LIFE-BLOOD OF MORE THAN  
TWO HUNDRED PATRIOT HEROES  
MADE THIS BATTLE GROUND  
SACRED FOREVER.

---

THIS MONUMENT WAS BUILT  
A.D. 1883, IN THE YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE 107,

BY GRATEFUL DWELLERS IN THE MOHAWK  
VALLEY,  
UNDER THE DIRECTION  
OF THE ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AIDED BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT  
AND THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

Another monument still exists which has withstood the assaults of time,—the old Herkimer mansion in which the hero of Oriskany lived.

On yonder well-remembered hill,  
Scarred and neglected, old and gray,  
Rises the house, recalling still,  
The story of that bloody day;  
Deep, clear and beautifully bright,  
Through fields of waving grass and grain,  
Like silver flashing in the light,  
The Mohawk flows across the plain.

FRANK H. WILLARD.



The Residence of General Herkimer

Photograph by M. J. Bucklin





## CHAPTER VIII

### RIFLE AND TOMAHAWK—(*Continued*)

Brave Herkimer, our General, 's dead,  
And Colonel Cox is slain,  
And many more and valiant men  
We ne'er shall see again.

THE sortie of that brave and daring officer, Colonel Marinus Willett, dubbed "the Devil" by the Indians for his impetuosity and dash, had met with the success which his own gallantry and that of his brave band deserved. They attacked first the partially denuded camp of Sir John Johnson and his remaining men, all of whom, being unprepared, fled hurriedly to the river. The Indian encampment stood next, most of its occupants then being on the battle-field. The remainder took to the woods.

The spoils of battle fell thus into American hands, and were conveyed by quantities in wagons to the fort. Provisions, journals, blankets, and clothing were captured and so were five British flags which were promptly nailed to the staff, while, above them, for the first time, triumphant, waved the new-born American flag.

There was also much miscellaneous plunder, for example, "One Scarlet Coat trimmed with Good Lace, three laced Hatts, a good deal of Money in Specie and paper."

In commemoration of Colonel Willett's part in this event, he afterwards received a vote of thanks from Congress and the gift of an elegant sword.

At nine o'clock, on the evening of the battle, a letter was penned by two of the American prisoners in St. Leger's camp, Colonel Bellinger and Major Frey, and was conveyed to the fort by Colonel Butler. The letter read:

9 o'clock P.M.—CAMP BEFORE FORT STANWIX.

6th August, 1777.

SIR,

It is with concern we are to acquaint you that this was the fatal day in which the succors which were intended for your relief have been attacked and defeated, with great loss of numbers killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. Our regard for your safety and lives, and our sincere advice to you is if you will avoid inevitable ruin and destruction, to surrender the fort you pretend to defend against a formidable body of troops and a good train of artillery, which we are witnesses of; when, at the same time, you have no further support or relief to expect. We are sorry to inform you that most of the principal officers are killed; to wit, Gen. Herkimer, Colonels Cox, Seeber, Isaac Paris, Captain Graves, and many others too tedious to mention. The British army from Canada, being now perhaps before Albany, the possession of

which place of course includes the conquest of the Mohawk River and this fort.

Need we say that this letter was due to coercion? As to the result, the endorsement on the back is as follows:

Gen. St. Leger, on the day of the date of this letter, made a verbal summons of the Fort, by his Adjutant General and Colonel Butler and who then handed this letter; when Colonel Gansevoort refused any answer to a verbal summons, unless made by General St. Leger himself, but at the mouth of his cannon.

On the day following, three British officers, one of them Colonel Butler, came to the fort under protection of a flag of truce. They were blindfolded and led into a lighted room, where they met several American officers. After the passing of wine Major Ancrom, one of the British officers, said:

I am directed by Colonel St. Leger, the officer commanding the army now investing this garrison, to inform the commandant that the Colonel has, with much difficulty, prevailed on the Indians to agree, that if the garrison, without farther resistance, shall be delivered up, with the public stores belonging to it, to the investing army, the officers and soldiers shall have all their private property secured to them. And in order that the garrison may have a sufficient pledge to this effect, Col. Butler accompanies me to assure them that not a hair of the head of any one of them

shall be hurt. Here turning to Colonel Butler, he said, "That, I think, was the expression they made use of, was it not?" To which the Colonel answered "Yes."

I am likewise directed to remind the commandant that the defeat of General Herkimer must deprive the garrison of all hopes of relief, especially as General Burgoyne is now in Albany; so that, sooner or later, the fort must fall into our hands. Colonel St. Leger, from an earnest desire to prevent further bloodshed, hopes these terms will not be refused, as in this case it will be out of his power to make them again. It was with great difficulty the Indians consented to the present arrangement as it will deprive them of that plunder which they always calculated upon on similar occasions. Should these, the present terms, be rejected, it will be out of the power of the Colonel to restrain the Indians, who are very numerous and much exasperated, not only from plundering the property, but destroying the lives, probably, of the greater part of the garrison. Indeed, the Indians are so exceedingly provoked and mortified by the losses they have sustained in the late actions, having had several of their favorite chiefs killed, that they threaten and the Colonel,—if the present arrangements should not be entered into,—will not be able to prevent them from executing their threats to march down the country, and destroy the settlement, with its inhabitants. In this case, not only men, but women and children, will experience the sad effects of their vengeance. These considerations, it is ardently hoped, will produce a proper effect, and induce the commandant, by complying with the terms now offered, to save himself from future regret, when it will be too late.



Colonel Willett replied:

Do I understand you, Sir? I think you say that you come from a British colonel, who is commander of the army that invests this fort, and, by your uniform, you appear to be an officer in the British service. You have made a long speech, on the occasion of your visit, which, stripped of all its superfluities, amounts to this, that you come from a British colonel to the commandant of this garrison to tell him that if he does not deliver up the garrison into the hands of your Colonel, he will send his Indians to murder our women and children. You will please to reflect, Sir, that their blood will be on your head, not on ours. We are doing our duty; this garrison is committed to our charge and we will take care of it. After you get out of it, you may turn round and look at its outside, but never expect to come in again, unless you come a prisoner. I consider the message you have brought a degrading one for a British officer to send, and by no means reputable for a British officer to carry. For my own part, I declare, before I would consent to deliver this garrison to such a murdering set as your army, by your own account, consists of, I would suffer my body to be filled with splinters, and set on fire, as you know has at times been practised by such hordes of women and children killers as belong to your army.

Says Stone in his *Life of Joseph Brant*:

Colonel Willett observes in his narrative, whence these facts are drawn, that in the delivery he looked

the British major full in the face, and that he spoke with emphasis is not doubted.

On the 9th instant, Colonel St. Leger sent to Colonel Gansevoort a letter embodying the same sentiments expressed verbally by Major Ancrom.

By way of reply, he received the following:

*Col. Gansevoort to Col. St. Leger.*

FORT SCHUYLER, Aug. 9th, 1777.

SIR: Your letter of this day's date I have received, in answer to which I say, that it is my determined resolution, with the forces under my command, to defend this fort to the last extremity in behalf of the United American States, who have placed me here to defend it against all their enemies.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most ob't humble serv't,

PETER GANSEVOORT,

*Col. commanding Fort Schuyler.*

GEN. BARRY ST. LEGER.

Meanwhile patriots outside the walls had not been idle and at the above date the following letter was penned to the Albany Committee:

GERMAN FLATS, COMMITTEE CHAMBERS.

August 9th, 1777.

GENTLEMEN: Just arrived Captain Demuth and John Adam Helmer the bearer hereof, with an account that they arrived with some difficulty at Fort Schuyler, the 6th of the month, being sent there by order of Gen.

Herkimer. Before he set out for the field of battle, he requested some assistance from the fort, in order to make an effort to facilitate our march to the fort. Two hundred and sixty men were granted. They made a sally, encountered the enemy, killed many, destroyed the tents of the enemy and came off victorious to the fort. The commander (of the fort) desired them to acquaint us, and his superiors, that he is wanting assistance, and thinks to stand out so long that timely assistance could come to his relief.

Concerning the battle: On our side, all accounts agreed that a number of the enemy is killed; the flower of our militia either killed or wounded except one hundred and fifty, who stood the field and forced the enemy to retreat; the wounded were brought off by these brave men,—the dead they left on the field for want of proper support. We will not take upon us to tell of the behavior of the rear. So far we know, they took to flight the first firing. Gen. Herkimer is wounded; Col. Cox seemingly killed and a great many officers are among the slain. We are surrounded by Tories, a party of one hundred of whom are now on their march through the woods. We refer you for further information to the bearer. Major Watts of the enemy is killed, Joseph Brant, William Johnson, several known Tories and a number of Indians.

Gentlemen, we pray you will send us succor. By the death of most part of our committee members, the field officers and General being wounded, everything is out of order; the people entirely dispirited, our country at Esopus unrepresented, that we can not hope to stand it any longer without your aid; we

will not mention the shocking aspect our fields do show.

Faithful to our country, we remain,

Your sorrowful brethren, the few remaining  
members of the Committee

PETER S. DYGERT, *Chairman.*

*To the Chairman of the Committee of Albany.*

Meanwhile, the soldiers of the garrison of Fort Stanwix were shut off from the Americans of the outside world. The situation was not desperate in all respects. The artillery of the enemy made little impression upon the walls of the fort which might have held out indefinitely, had there been an adequate supply of provisions. As it was plain, however, that eventual starvation faced them, unless presently relieved, it was determined to effect a communication with their friends.

Again came to the front that dashing officer, Marinus Willett. Choosing Major Stockwell for his companion, the two ventured forth, at dead of night, on the evening of the tenth. Undiscovered, they passed the sentries, crawling on hands and knees along the edge of a morass—then crossing the river on a log. Unencumbered by even a blanket, they made their way, with no provisions save crackers and cheese, and a small canteen of spirits, and their only armor a spear apiece. A few berries gathered on the way eked out their supply of food, and at 3 P. M. on August 12th, they reached Fort Dayton. To their joy they



learned that orders had already been given for the relief of the fort, and the Colonel rode on horseback to Albany to meet Benedict Arnold, who was to command, and accompanied him to Fort Dayton.

Meanwhile, the following manifesto had been issued, and directed to the American patriots:

BY BARRY ST. LEGER, ESQ.

Commander-in-chief of a chosen body of troops from the grand army, as well as an extensive corps of Indian allies from all the nations, &c., &c.

The forces entrusted to my command are designed to act in concert, and upon a common principle, with the numerous armies and fleets which already display, in every quarter of America, the power, justice, and, when properly sought, the mercy of the King.

The cause in which the British arms are thus exerted applies to the most affecting interest of the human heart, and the military servants of the Crown, at first called forth for the sole purpose of restoring the rights of the constitution, now combine with love of their country and duty to their sovereign, the other incitements which spring from a due sense of the general privileges of mankind. To the eyes and ears of the temperate part of the public, and to the breast of suffering thousands in the provinces, be the melancholy appeal, whether the present unnatural rebellion has not been made a foundation for the completest system of tyranny that ever God in his displeasure suffered for a time to be exercised over a froward and stubborn generation. Arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation of

property, persecution and torture unprecedented in the inquisitions of the Romish Church, are among the palpable enormities that verify the affirmative. These are inflicted by Assemblies and Committees, who dare to profess themselves friends to liberty, upon the most quiet subjects, without distinction of age or sex, for the sole crime, often for the sole suspicion, of having adhered in principle to the government under which they were born, and to which by every tie divine and human they owe allegiance. To consummate these shocking proceedings, the profanation of religion is added to the most profligate prostitution of common reason; the consciences of men are set at nought; and multitudes are compelled not only to bear arms, but also to swear subjection to an usurpation they abhor.

Animated by these considerations; at the head of troops in the full powers of health, discipline and valor, determined to strike when necessary, and anxious to spare when possible; I by these presents invite and exhort all persons, in all places where the progress of this army may point, and by the blessing of God I will extend it far, to maintain such a conduct as may justify me in protecting their lands, habitations, and families. The intention of this address is to hold forth security, not depredation to the country.

To those whose spirit and principle may induce to partake the glorious task of redeeming their countrymen from dungeons, and re-establishing the blessings of legal government, I offer encouragement and employment; and upon the first intelligence of their associations, I will find means to assist their undertaking. The domestic, the industrious, the infirm, and even the timid inhabitants, I am desirous to protect, provided

they remain quietly at their houses; that they do not suffer their cattle to be removed, nor their corn or forage to be secreted or destroyed; that they do not break up their bridges or roads; nor by any other acts, directly or indirectly, endeavor to obstruct the operations of the King's troops or supply or assist those of the enemy. Every species of provision brought to my camp will be paid for at an equitable rate and in solid coin. If notwithstanding these endeavors and sincere inclinations to effect them, the frenzy of hostility should remain, I trust I shall stand acquitted in the eyes of God and man, in denouncing and executing the vengeance of the State against the wilful outcasts. The messengers of justice and of wrath convict them in the field, and devastation, famine, and every concomitant horror that a reluctant but indispensable prosecution of military duty must occasion, will bar the way to their return.

BARRY ST. LEGER.

CAMP BEFORE FORT STANWIX, August ye 10th, 1777.

*By order of the Commander-in-chief,*  
Will. Osb. Hamilton, *Secretary.*

During the absence of Willett, the American troops stationed at Fort Dayton had surprised a secret meeting at the house of a neighboring loyalist. Among others captured there was Walter N. Butler, who had brought with him the following appeal to the people, signed by John Johnson, Daniel W. Claus, and himself.

CAMP BEFORE FORT STANWIX, August 13, 1777.  
*To the Inhabitants of Tryon County.*

Notwithstanding the many and great injuries we



have received in person and property at your hands, and being at the head of victorious troops, we most ardently wish to have peace restored to this once happy country; to obtain which we are willing and desirous, upon proper submission on your parts, to bury in oblivion all that is past and hope that you are, or will be, convinced in the end that we were your friends and good advisers, and not such wicked, designing men as those who led you into error and almost total ruin. You have, no doubt, great reason to dread the resentment of the Indians, on account of the loss they sustained in the late action and the morbid obstinacy of your troops in this garrison, who have no resource but in themselves; for which reason it is become your indispensable duty, as you must answer the consequences, to send a deputation of your principal people to oblige them immediately to what, in a very little time, they must be forced,—the surrender of the garrison—in which case we will engage, on the faith of Christians, to protect you from the violence of the Indians.

Surrounded as you are by victorious armies, one-half (if not the greater part) of the inhabitants friends to government, without any resource, surely you cannot hesitate a moment to accept the terms proposed to you by friends and well-wishers to the country.

|              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| JOHN JOHNSON | } <i>Superintendents.</i> |
| D. W. CLAUS  |                           |
| JOHN BUTLER  |                           |

These effusions brought out the following spirited reply:



By the Hon. Benedict Arnold, Esq., Major General and Commander-in-chief of the army of the United States of America on the Mohawk River.

Whereas a certain Barry St. Leger, a Brigadier General in the service of George of Great Britain, at the head of a banditti of robbers, murderers and traitors, composed of savages of America, and more savage Britons (among whom is the noted Sir John Johnson, John Butler and Daniel Claus) have lately appeared in the frontiers of the State and have threatened ruin and destruction to all the inhabitants of the United States. They have also, by artifice and misrepresentation, induced many of the ignorant and unwary subjects of these States to forfeit their allegiance to the same and join with them in their atrocious crimes, and parties of treachery and parricide.

Humanity to those poor deluded wretches, who are hastening blindfold to destruction, induces me to offer them and all others concerned (whether Savages, Germans, Americans or Britons) PARDON, provided they do, within ten days from the date hereof, come in and lay down their arms, sue for protection, and swear allegiance to the United States of America.

But if still blind to their own interest and safety, they obstinately persist in their wicked courses, determining to draw on themselves the just vengeance of Heaven, and of their exasperated country, they must expect no mercy from either. B. ARNOLD, M. G.

Given under my hand, Head-quarters,  
German Flatts, 20th August, 1777.

Meanwhile nearer and nearer to Fort Stanwix came the beleaguering force and lower and lower

grew the stock of provisions within. Some of the officers began to consider whether it would not be better to surrender than to starve. Not so the gallant Gansevoort, who had made up his mind to a night sally, if nothing else would serve. General Arnold, waiting for reinforcements, did not move, but contrived to send messages of encouragement to the fort. At length, fearing disaster in further delay, on the morning of the twenty-third, he set out, and was met with the joyful news that the siege was at an end.

Han Yost Schuyler, a half Tory, half lunatic, a singular character of the valley, had been found at the Tory gathering near Fort Dayton and condemned to die. For him his mother pleaded in wild, eloquent strains, the stern Benedict Arnold acting as the judge. At length, Han Yost's brother Nicholas was accepted as a hostage and Han Yost was given his life on condition of acting a part. His clothing having been purposely riddled with bullets, he suddenly appeared before St. Leger and his encampment and was finally taken to the presence of the commandant himself. Narrating some facts and inventing, he told of his capture, his condemnation, and escape; of the multitudinous forces marching to the relief of Fort Stanwix,—as many as the leaves to which he pointed. An Oneida runner, with several friends, also dropped in among the Indians and created a panic among them. They started to decamp. He tried to detain them, but mischie-

vous Indians raised a shout,—“They are coming! They are coming!” Throwing away their arms, the British army took to their heels, leaving their tents standing and many valuables behind. The Indians accompanied them in haste, making up, occasionally, on the way, for their disappointment in the matter of scalps by plundering and murdering whatever soldiers, American or British, became stragglers from the main army. They were angry, indeed. They had not been allowed, as they had been promised, to sit by and smoke their pipes, and afterwards to scalp, but had borne the brunt of battle and lost many of their best chiefs.

Thus the disconsolate British army made its sorry retreat to Canada, the Mohawk Valley was saved, the armies of Clinton, Burgoyne, and St. Leger failed to keep their appointment at Albany, and the siege of Fort Schuyler was at an end.

The following forts were in existence at the beginning of the Revolution, all more or less out of repair: Fort Stanwix, at the present Rome; old Fort Schuyler at the present Utica; Fort Dayton near the site of the court-house at Herkimer; Fort Herkimer, on the Mohawk, near the mouth of the West Canada Creek, and Fort Hunter, at the mouth of Schoharie Creek. Fort Plain, about half a mile west of the present village of that name, was probably garrisoned in 1777. A three-story blockhouse<sup>1</sup> was erected a little

<sup>1</sup> “This was in all probability the ‘Fort Rensselaer’ mentioned

to the north in 1780 and 1781. During the Revolution, the name Fort Rensselaer was frequently applied to Fort Plain or the blockhouse in its vicinity. During the war, Forts Plank, Clyde, and Willett were built in the present town of Minden. Schenectady, Johnson Hall, Queen Anne's Chapel, and the islands at the mouth of the Mohawk were fortified. Quite a number of the more substantial private houses were also made ready for defence, among which might be named the old Van Alstyne building and Forts Ehle, Failing, Wagner, Fox, Hess, Paris, Windecker, Klock, and Timmerman. Early in 1776, Colonel Van Schaick with his regulars was stationed at Johnstown and Colonel Dayton with his troops was posted at German Flats.

There was still mourning throughout the valley. Half of the brave little band who marched to Oriskany had marched never to return. One half of the wives were widows, one half of the children were fatherless.

To the troubled condition of the frontier the following extract from a petition of August 28, 1777, will testify:

*To the honorable the Council of Safety of the State of New York.*

The Memorial of William Harper and Frederick

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in the court-martial proceedings against Gen. Robert Van Rensselaer."—*Tryon County Minute Book*—from notes by Samuel Ludlow Frey.



Fisher in behalf of themselves and the Inhabitants of Tryon County Humbly Sheweth

That the late Incursions of the Enemy and their Savages into the said County and upon a part of the County have reduced the Inhabitants to the utmost distress. The Harvests not yet gathered in are rotting upon the Ground. The Grass uncut. The fallow fields not yet ploughed. The Cattle in a great measure destroyed.

That altho' by the Blessing of God the siege of Fort Schuyler hath been raised, yet the Inhabitants labour under the greatest Apprehension, and in the opinion of your memorialists those apprehensions are not ill-founded. The known method of warfare among the Savages and the Infamy annexed to those who suffer their Friends to fall unrevenged, gives but too much reason to believe that the Fears of those unhappy People will be realized.

The above was one of several pitiful appeals for relief.

Petty raids were of constant occurrence. Such a one took place at Fairfield about the middle of March, 1778, another at Snyder's Bush about two weeks later, still another at Tilleborough, the present town of Ephratah, on the 30th of April.

On the 18th of July, 1778, a little hamlet called Andrustown, in the vicinity of German Flats, somewhat to the southeast was attacked by Indians under Brant. Houses were looted and destroyed, four men were killed,—one burned in his own house. Others were taken captive.

A small pursuing party of Whigs followed, but, being unable to overtake the enemy, in revenge, burned a part of Young's settlement near Otsego Lake, a small collection of houses erected by people whose leader was a Tory.

Still appeals for help came flying in, one of the most imperative being that of Colonel Bellinger to Colonel Klock.

PALENTINE September 16th 1778.

SIR, This Evening came John Helmer, one of the Nine Men of the Rangers which we sent out on Mondaylast; they was attacked at Major Edmesson's place and only one has escaped, the said John Helmer; what is become of the rest he cannot tell. The Enemy, after he making his Escape passed by him in the Bush; about two O'Clock this afternoon about Nine Miles from the German Flats he laid behind a Tree and counted about 200 Men, but he thinks that he did not count above half and as we expect them this Night or at farthest to Morrow Morning now is the Time for you to assist us. Therefore, I humbly beg for God sake to assist us all that lays in your power and let your people travel all Night for our assistance.

I am yours,

COLONEL PETER BELLINGER.

We have the order of Colonel Klock for the immediate advance of troops, but reinforcements did not arrive in time.

On the same evening, a rainy night, the warrior Brant, with a large force of Indians, encamped

in a ravine on the south side of the river, near the German Flats (originally Burnetsfield). Here stood the fine stone residence of the Herkimers and the old stone church. On the opposite side was reared Fort Dayton, on the site of the present lovely town of Herkimer. Before the dawn the savages were about,—but, unknown to them, the people, forewarned by a brave scout, John Helmer, had gathered in the forts, where they watched, in heart-broken admiration, the great illumination, as, simultaneously, at daybreak, their homes were committed to the flames, and the savages, disappointed of bloodshed and scalps, were rushing down into the meadows to drive off the cattle. The loss in human lives was two. The property loss has been given as of<sup>1</sup> “63 dwelling-houses, 57 barns, 3 grist-mills and 2 saw-mills burnt with most of the furniture and grain kept therein; and 235 houses, 229 horned cattle, 269 sheep and 93 oxen, taken and carried away.” Many valuable articles of furniture had been saved by the villagers and removed into the fort by means of boats.<sup>2</sup> “The settlement, which but the day before for ten miles had smiled in plenty and in beauty was now houseless and destitute.”

The militia gathered and pursued with little result, but a body of Oneida Indians followed to Unadilla, burned some houses, brought back a few of the cattle, and took several prisoners.

<sup>1</sup> Benton, *History of Herkimer Co.*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Stone's *Life of Joseph Brant*, vol. i., p. 365.

The fears of the people of Tryon at this time are well set forth in the following petition:

TRYON COUNTY,

August 4th 1779

May it please your Excellency; The humble Petition of the Freeholders and inhabitants of Tryon Co,— setting forth the great Distresses they labour under on account of the Indians; whereof Numbers pretending to be friends, stroll about the County, draw and eat up our provisions, and are fed by public Stores, whilst they watch to cut our Throats. Several Instances of this kind have already happened, which can be proved and a Number of the Inhabitants have been murdered and scalped, some of which are alive yet, by pretended Friends. If it could be supposed, that there are some trusty enough not to avail themselves of the opportunities of Murder and Rapine (a thing very unwillingly believed by those, who are acquainted with the Nature of Savages, and who are so unlucky as to be near them, as to be taught by Experience, which is the Case of your Petitioners,) who can know whether he be met by an Honest One or a ravenous creature. Your Petitioners therefore, humbly beg that such Regulations might be made that the Friend Indians be called in to live in an inner part of the Country and that all found at the Frontiers should be treated as Enemies. We do not doubt but it is generally evident that those who bear the Name of Friends at best are but a Cover to the Enemy, and that it must be indifferent to the Indians where they eat the public provisions.

Relying on your Excellency's Goodness to tacke our



Grievances into your most serious Consideration, we humbly beg your recommendation of the premises to the Legislature and otherwise to grant us such speedy relief, as in your Wisdom you think meet; and your Petitioners as in Duty bound will ever pray——

Even more terrible than the red men to the patriotic denizens of the valley were their own former neighbors, sometimes brothers and friends, —the loyalists. Coming back from Canada in war-paint and feathers, often was their presence revealed by a bit of fair skin whence the paint had been rubbed, or the lighter-toned eyes of a “blue-eyed Indian.” At home, also, were these “King’s men” harboring their friends when they returned as spies, and marking for destruction the houses not bearing the Tory sign—the skull-bone of a horse placed upon the top of a stake. Particularly was this the case at the former home of the Johnsons.

Many were the prisoners borne away to Canada, suffering hardships of every description—some never to return, some, after romantic adventures, finally escaping or being restored in time to their homes. Of the experiences sometimes incurred in captivity we have a striking example in the deposition of Moses Younglove.

Moses Younglove, surgeon of Gen. Herkimer’s brigade of militia, deposeth and saith, that being in the battle of said militia above Oriskany, on the 6th of August last, toward the close of said battle, he

surrendered himself a prisoner to a savage, who immediately gave him up to a sergeant of Sir John Johnson's regiment; soon after which a Lieutenant in the Indian department, came up in company with several tories, when said Mr. Grinnis by name, drew his tomahawk at this deponent, and with a deal of persuasion was hardly prevailed on to spare his life. He then plundered him of his watch, buckles, spurs, etc., and other tories following his example, stripped him almost naked with a great many threats, while they were stripping and massacreing prisoners on every side. That this deponent was brought before Mr. Butler, Sen, who demanded of him *what he was fighting for?* to which deponent answered; "He fought for the liberty that God and nature gave him, and to defend himself and dearest connexions from the massacre of the savages." To which Butler replied: "You are a d——d impudent rebel"; and so saying immediately turned to the savages, encouraging them to kill him and if they did not, the deponent and the other persons should be hanged on the gallows then preparing.— That several prisoners were then taken forward to the enemy's headquarters with frequent scenes of horror and massacre, in which tories were active as well as savages; and in particular one Davis, formerly known in Tryon county on the Mohawk river. That Lieut. Singleton, of Sir John Johnson's regiment being wounded, entreated the savages to kill the prisoners, which they accordingly did, as nigh as this deponent can judge, about six or seven.

That Isaac Paris Esq. was also taken the same road without receiving from them any remarkable insult, except stripping until some tories came up who kicked and abused him, after which the savages, thinking

him a notable offender, murdered him barbarously. That those of the prisoners who were delivered up to the provost guards were ordered not to use any violence in protecting the prisoners from the savages who came every day with knives, feeling of the prisoners to know which were fattest. That they dragged one of the prisoners out of the guard with the most lamentable cries; tortured him for a long time, and this deponent was informed by both tories and Indians, that they ate him, as appears they did another, on an island on Lake Ontario, by bones found there nearly picked, just after they had crossed the lake with the prisoners. That the prisoners who were not delivered up were murdered in considerable numbers from day to day round the camp, some of them so nigh that their shrieks were heard. That Capt. Martin, of the bateaux-men, was delivered to the Indians at Oswego, on pretense of his having kept back some useful intelligence. That this deponent, during his imprisonment, and his fellows, were kept almost starved for provisions, and what they drew were of the worst kind such as spoiled flour, biscuit full of maggots and mouldy, and no soap allowed, or other method of keeping clean, and were insulted, struck, etc., without mercy by the guards, without any provocation given. That this deponent was informed by several sergeants orderly on St. Leger, that *twenty dollars* were offered in general orders for every American scalp.

MOSES YOUNGLOVE.

JOHN BARCLAY, *Chairman of Albany Committee.*

Many were the inducements offered to enlist union men as loyalists. When Godfrey Shew



was captive Sir John requested him to use his influence over his fellow prisoners to persuade them to enlist in the loyalist cause. The next morning, a recruiting officer boarded the ship to be thus introduced by Mr. Shew:

Here is a recruiting officer come to enlist you in the British service! My lads, if any of you want to sell your country for a green coat with red facings, and a cap with a lock of red horse-hair hanging down one side of it, you now have a good chance!

No recruits were obtained.

In reply to a letter from Walter Butler we have the following from Governor Clinton:

ALBANY, Jan'y 1st 1779.

SIR, A letter dated the 12th of November last signed by you and directed to Genl. Schuyler and which you delivered to John Campbell is come to hand; as its contents related to Persons who were Citizens of the State, with which the Military don't interfere, the Letter was not delivered to Brig't Genl. Hand, who then commanded in this department, but transmitted to His Excellency Governor Clinton, that his Pleasure might be known on its Contents. He has authorized me to make the Exchange you request. I am at a loss to know where to direct to you, but also to what part of the Country the Unhappy Prisoners taken from this State have been carried. I therefore send the Bearers John Campbell and Newkirk, with a Flagg to carry this Letter to any place, where they



may learn where you are or any other officer who can afford the Exchange in your Absence.

Should the Prisoners be in any of the Indian Villages, and in a Condition to be moved you will please to send them to the nearest of our Settlements, or if you do not chuse to do that, I will send proper Persons to treat and receive them at any place you may appoint.

I am not informed if Mrs. Butler, her Family and such others as will be given in exchange for those you have in captivity and those you have suffered to return as mentioned in your Letter, would chuse to move at this inclement Season; if they do, they shall be sent, if not, they may remain until Spring, and then may either go to Oswego or Canada at their option.

Should the Prisoners, taken at Cherry Valley, or any others belonging to this State be at Niagara, it will be impossible for them to return until Spring, and then I request that they may be sent to Oswego or Fort Schuyler, and that you will send notice of your determination that Provision may be made accordingly.

Do not flatter yourself, Sir, that your Father's Family have been detained on acc't of any Consequence they were supposed to be of or that it is determined they should be exchanged, in consideration of the Threat contained in your Letter. I should hope for the honor of civilised nations and the sake of human nature, that the British Officers had exerted themselves in restraining the Barbarities of the Savages; but it is difficult even for the most disinterested mind to believe it as numerous Instances of Barbarities having been perpetrated where Savages were not present, or, if they were, British force was

sufficient to have restrained them, had there been a real desire so to do.

The enormous murders committed at Wyoming and Cherry Valley would clearly have justified a retaliation, and that your Mother did not fall a Sacrifice to the Resentment of the survivors of those families who were so barbarously massacred, is owing to the humane Principles which the Conduct of their Enemies induced a belief that they are utter Strangers to.

That the Tory women also had their trials the following attests:

Sept—— 1779—

To his Excellency George Clinton, Governor and Commander in Chief of the State of New York. The Humble Petition of Chris'n M<sup>c</sup>Donald, Kate M<sup>c</sup>Intosh, Ann M<sup>c</sup>Donald, Else M<sup>c</sup>Donald, Ann M<sup>c</sup>Pherson, Mary M<sup>c</sup>Donald, Molly Pescod and many other families Sheweth; That your Petitioners are reduc'd to the greatest distress imaginable by having their Cattle and Effects sold by the Commissioners of Sequestration and no way of getting a living where they might support themselves untill some Exchange might be made from Canada. And your Petitioners spoke to your Excellency's Brother, the General, when he was in Johns Town, and he told your Petitioners they would go in May, so that your Petitioners Planted nothing in hopes of being sent away, which makes their distress now the greater as winter coming on and no Provision made for it. Therefore, humbly hope your Excellency will give

your Petitioners permission to go to Canada to their Husbands, and if that cannot be comply'd with your Petitioners hope your Excellency will allow them some small support untill an Exchange may take place. And your Petitioners shall ever Pray.

PALATINE March 17 1780.

DEAR SIR: On Tuesday last we had an account that a party of the enemy had been discovered between Fort Schuyler and the German Flatts and that from their course it was thought they Intended to fall in at Reimensnyder's Bush (four miles north of the Little Falls). Unluckily, thro' the Negligence of someone who was Intrusted with the Message, it did not reach the Bush till the evening following; on Wednesday about one O'Clock afternoon the party fell in, killed one man, and took Captain John Keyser (an Uncle of my wife's) with two sons, one Klock and one Shafer, Prisoners,—the Party Burned Capt'n Keyser's House, Killed his Sheep &c and took away his provisions and best Effects leaving Mrs. Keyser with three small Children, destitute of Cloathing or any other necessary of life,—from the Information Mrs. Keyser gives the Party consisted of Fifty men chiefly Tories whom as they were dressed in Paint, she could not know.

A detachment of our Militia went up but for the want of Snow-Shoes could make no pursuit.

As the Tracks of the Enemy crossed from the south to the North side of the River we judge they have come thro' the County of the five Nations.

People that have as little confidence as I put in our Oneidas, allied, think as I do that the Oneidas have





known of this Party and very probably been harbored there.

I am informed that a Number of women (Tories) are now at Saratoga, from whence they are to go to Canada as soon as the lakes open; as this will necessarily open a correspondence between the Commanding officer here, and the one in Canada on the subject of an Exchange of Prisoners, I beg the favour of you to mention the above to the commanding Officer of the Northern Department, and to use your Influence to have Capt. Keyser and the unfortunate prisoners with him, exchanged in the spring; from the many former Instances of Friendship I have received at your hands I cannot doubt but you will be pleased to comply with my request in this particular.

The Irruption of this party so early, Indicates not only a Troublesome but Dangerous Summer to us in these parts. I wish those who have the Superintendence of affairs to be assured that unless a Number of Troops are sent up speedily, who with the occasional assistance of the Militia can repel the incursions of the enemy that very few of the People will think it safe to remain here; the County is very extensive and lies open on all sides to the Inroads of the savages. I need not describe to you the Distresses of such as are obliged to abandon their Habitations and the consequent Distress and inconvenience of such as they fly to for refuge; besides the preventing of which, the crops, now in the ground, and those to be put in must (I should rather say ought) to be saved or there will be a famine for those who now reside here. I have every opportunity to convince myself that people have Bread for no longer than the ensuing Harvest,—Indeed too many have not that.



It may appear that this letter is dictated from a spirit of despondence. It is true I feel for my fellow creatures and that from the Belief I have that this country will suffer bitterly unless we have relief sent up.

With this you will receive a Letter to my Father which be pleased to Forward. I have wrote to him for permission to send my wife and Children with some of my Effects to him as soon as the river opens. I am with my best respects to your family your most Obedient Servt

CHRIST'R P. YATES.

The Hon'ble ABRAHAM YATES, Esqr.

(Forwarded to Gov. Clinton.)

To guard against Tories who frequently returned to Johnstown by way of Sacandaga, a small blockhouse was built in 1779, a few miles south of that point. On the 1st of January, 1780, the garrison broke up. Danger was no longer expected. In March there was again a partial garrison, which was withdrawn the 1st of April. One Solomon Woodworth was then living in the house.

On that same night seven Indians attacked the house, attempting to set fire to it by means of torches. The dog, awakened, alarmed his master, who, bounding out, knocked the torches into the snow, regaining the house, almost unwounded, and barred the door against his foes. Firing through a loophole, he wounded one of the men, who was then borne away by his companions. All were

finally overtaken in camp and slain by Woodworth and volunteers with him.

At the head of a regiment of his Royal Greens, some British troops, and some two hundred Tories and Indians, in all five hundred men, Sir John Johnson entered the neighborhood of Johnstown on Sunday, the 21st of May, bringing ruin and devastation in his train. Just before striking the village, the army was divided,—one detachment to descend upon the valley in the vicinity of Tribes Hill, the other to march to Johnson Hall.

At midnight the dwellers at Tribes Hill were rudely awakened. Houses were plundered, then put to the torch. Men were shot down and scalped. Messrs. Hansen, Platt, and Aldridge and three Visscher brothers, who were scalped, were among the victims.

Sir John secured from the Hall his buried plate and treasures, which were then borne away in the knapsacks of forty of the soldiers. Among the prisoners captured were the Sammons brothers. All houses at Caughnawaga were burned and several people killed, among whom were four old men over eighty years of age.

FORT STONE ARABIA, May 23d 1780

SIR: I received yours of the 15th Instant, an answer to mine of the 13th, wherein I gave you a Particular Account of the Enemy's design and find also that Genl. Tenbrock had his orders to cooperate with and furnish me with as much aid from his Brigade as may appear requisite, and in his Power to give, and I also



General Herkimer Monument

Photograph by M. J. Bucklin





Requested assistance of him, but have not seen a man yet, nor heard that they was on their march to our assistance; all the assistance I get of him is by fair Promises by paper and Ink, but not a man.

Sir, I must inform you to my sorrow that Sir John Johnson with 400 wight and 200 Indians made an Approach and attacked the Mohock District in our County the 22d Instant, and have Burnt all the houses and Barns from below Tripes hill to Anthony's Nose, excepting a few Tories' Houses, being about twelve or thirteen Miles the Number of Houses. I can give no Account at Present; all the Acct I can give you at Present of killed and taken is nine kilted and thirty-three Prisoners, amongst which Colo. Fisher's two Brothers are kilted and he himself scalped and badly wounded. Major Fonda's Father is kilted.

Immediately in Receiving Intelligence from the Enemies approach I ordered all the young men out and left the old men in the Forts; also Colo. Clyde turns out with his young men; we mustered about 300 men and followed the Enemy to Johns Town, where they came in sight of them, but finding themselves too weak to attack or pursue them, they Returned to this Place again, where we are together in a miserable Circumstances the Enemy is at Johns Town yet and the tories joining them very fast. I expect every minute this Place will be attackted. We have intelligence that Joseph Brant with a Strong party would attackt the South Side of the River this day and would make a sweep of it if he could.

Just as I was writing this Letter I discovered a Great Smoke on the South side of the River towards Corvels Kill and Turlag [Dorlach]. Col. Clyde was with me just now, and when he discovered the smoke

above mentioned, he returned to Fort Plank with his men; so it seems we can no longer assist each other; therefore I beseech you would afford as soon as possible all the assistance you can, otherwise we shall be left a meal to our Cruel Enemy. I am your Excellencies most obedient Servant

JACOB KLOCK, COLL.

His Excellency GEO. CLINTON Esqr.

Since this letter was wrote a man arrived here, that made his escape from the enemy, who informed that he left them about Eleven O'Clock this day, about 4 miles from Johns Town, that they spoke of attacking this Place and that they were about 700 Strong.

Also an Express arrived by which I learn that another party have appeared at Snell's Bush about 13 Miles up the River.

J. K.

7 o'clock P.M. SCHENECTADY

23d May 1780.

DR. SIR: You doubtless have been Informed of the misfortune that has befel Tryon County. those who are nigher the Scene of distress I imagine feel it more forcibly than those at a distance. The Enemy yesterday morning began at the foot of Tripes Hill and burned before them to Anthony's Nose, they finished at the Widow Ecker's, a few houses only are saved; a Negro just came in who Informs that he belonged to John Fonda; was taken with his master and left the Enemy at four o'Clock this morning, two miles back of Johnstown; he says, that there were about forty white men prisoners; a great number of Blacks are gone off with Sir John, that being with his



The Fort Plain Memorial Boulder

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox





master John Fonda, he heard much discourse between him and Sir John; that Sir John upbraided him with the part he had acted and observed that if he had taken his, Sir John's advice, Fonda would have avoided all the Calamities that had now befallen him; he further mentioned that Brandt was to be down and Burn the South Side of the Mohawk River and that the Country would all be laid waste and wondered what kept him; he likewise Say that a great number of disaffected Came to Sr. John and took protection; old Mr. Fonda is killed, two of Collo' Fisher's Brothers, himself Scalped and Badly wounded. The Schenectady militia marched on the first alarm. Several are Returned for want of provision; the militia of Albany marched two hours ago from this place, a few excepted who have horses. I am Induced to believe that Sir John Intends to Remain where he is in order to Cooperate with Brandt; the Negroes who are with him are all armed; about thirty, nine months men, are in the fort at Johnstown, this place the Enemy did not dare attack; their force from the best Information Consists of about five hundred; a Company of British, a Number of Hessian Yagers, part of Sr John's Regiments and between two or three hundred Indians.

24th May 5 o'Clock P.M. An express arrived and brought the Inclosed account. I believe we are about 300 the greater part Six miles above, this may be at Johnstown by two o'Clock. I hope our party may have force Sufficient to attack them. It is impossible to paint the distress the Country is in.

Col. Van Schaick is with the militia I am in haste,  
Dr sir, your Excellency's most obdt Servt.

JOHN TAYLOR

GOV. CLINTON

FORT PLANK August 2d 1780 7 o'Clock

SIR: Yesterday I detached two officers and thirty men of mine and Collo. Cuyler's Regt. at the Willigas to wait the arrival of a Convoy of Boats at that place and with the rest of our men we proceeded to Caughnawaga, where we arrived last Evening and at four this morning we began our march and arrived at Canajoharie opposite to Mr. Frey's about eleven, with an Intention to halt till they arrived with the Batteaux, which we expect to-morrow about noon; immediately after we had cantoned as compact as possible our men, we were alarmed with a heavy smoke between John Abeail's and Fort Planck about four miles distant from where we had taken up our Quarters. This immediately was confirmed in the Eye of our whole Body and found the Enemy was busy employed to burn and destroy.

Instantly I did order both Regiments to be formed and proceed against the Enemy who were at that time in their full Carear and though our Numbers were not equal, yet I can assure you I shall be void of Justice if I omitted mentioning their Prudence and cool behavior without Distinction to all Ranks. And altho' they had been in full march since early in the morning they came up with such Vigor that the Enemy on our approach gave way and tho' in sight we had no opportunity to give them Battle, they retired in the usual way. Our first Halt was at a Fort erected near Mr. Abeal's House. The Inhabitants happy to see us. Directly after we had refreshed the men a few minutes a Number of Volunteers who were least fateigued joined me with the Field officers of both Regiments to see the Fate of this Fort, which we found as full of sorrowful weomen

and Children for their Husbands and Friends which were missing. They had, however, not made any Attempt to attack this Place. Such a Scean as we beheld since we left the River, passing dead Bodies of Men and Children most cruelly murdered, is not possible to be described.

I cannot ascertain at present the Number of poor Inhabitants killed and missing but believe the Loss considerable as the people were all at work in the Fields. I have endeavored to obtain the Strength of the Enemy; the accounts differ so much that I cannot ascertain their Number, but from the many Places they sat on Fire, as in one Instant, and from parties out in a large Circuit of Country collecting and driving off Cattle, I am led to believe that their Number is not small; our men are much fateigued.

We propose to remain here this Night. In the Morning we shall proceed and act as Circumstances shall turn up, and will inform you more particulars.

Some Persons pretend to say not less than one hundred dwelling House are burnt. As soon as I can any ways collect the more particular Facts, I shall not hesitate one Moment to let you know.

As to General Rensselaer, I have no other account from him but that he left Fort Herkimer on Monday last in the afternoon; he then by the best accounts I have been able to collect, besides the Convoy of Capt. Hicks with about fifty Head of Cattle and that his party consisted of about five hundred men. I have great Reason to believe he has got safe into Fort Schuyler.

The Enemy began setting Fire and destroying some way near the place and proceeded on to Canajihary; near the River, burnt their Church, Abeal's House and

its Neighborhood and upwards where they I am lead to believe got sight of us and then retreated. You will please to observe that very great Devestation is committed south-west of this place; excuse my Haste and the Distressed Situation and Circumstances and hope will sufficiently apologize. I'm Dr Gen'l &c.

AB'M WEMPLE.

(To GENERAL TEN BROECK.)

It was on August 6th, probably at the same time, that the brave Christopher Schell, of Schellsbush, some four miles from Fort Dayton, was attacked by Indians and Tories in his little blockhouse. His two little sons, who had been sent on an errand, were captured, but the father and three older sons did good service with rifles, firing through loopholes, while Mrs. Schell, with an axe, did good execution by bending the barrels of the invaders' muskets as they were thrust through crannies. The leader, Lieutenant McDonald, appearing at the door, demanded surrender, but was wounded and dragged through the door into the house. Christopher Schell, escaping through an underground opening, in stentorian tones simulated the approach of an officer in command of troops and the enemy fled, having suffered great loss. The wounded Tory, McDonald, received medical aid, but eventually bled to death.

Some idea of the distress incident to the times may be gathered from the following petition:



To his Excellency George Clinton Esquire, Governor, and Commander in Chief of the State of New York.

The Humble Petition of Mary Tenis, Catharine Shefin, Elizabeth Browning, Catharine Ringle, Margaret Keller, Mary Clements, Elizabeth Irine, Susannah Ohene, Gertrude Stinewax, and Magdalena Snackin, Widows of New Petersburg, Kingsland District in the County of Tryon and State of New York.

Humbly Sheweth, That your Poor Petitioners are all Widows who are left with large Families of Children; our husbands are all killed by the Indians and now lately, the Indians has Burn'd our houses and Barns and taken away and Destroyed, all our Horses and Cows. And your Petitioners dare not venture home to get our Harvest in. So that we, and our Fatherless Children are reduced to Poverty, and must inevitable want, if not relieved by your Excellencies Humanity and Bounty.

Your Petitioners begs leave to acquaint Your Excellence, that General Van Rensselaer ordered all the inhabitants of New Petersburg to leave the Place, and we are now at Fort Dayton, with scarce anything to subsist ourselves and Children.

Your Petitioners therefore Humbly Prays, that your Excellency will be pleased to grant, that we may draw Provision. Or order your poor Petitioners such Relief as your Excellency out of your abundant Goodness, shall think fit. And your Petitioners shall ever Pray.

FORT DAYTON, August 18th, 1780.

The number of those Widows, together with their Children is Fourty and four, and all of the Children incapable of earning a Livelihood.

The Humble Petition of Thomas Shoemaker one of the Inhabitants of the German Flatts Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioner since the present hostilities have commenced against Great Britain; have been reduced to a very low state by being driven from his Habitation with the loss of almost all his cattle. That on the Fifth of August last, his Wife and two Children was made Prisoners by the Savage Enemy; which has left him in a Deplorable Situation with three children. Your Petitioner humbly begs your Excellency would please to point out to him some means by which he may have his Wife and Children restored to him again; as the difficulty attending him with three small children left without a Mother makes the situation of your Petitioner truly miserable and if there is no way or means to have them restored again through to your Petitioner. Your Petitioner in Duty bound, will ever Pray

THOMAS SHOEMAKER  
GERMAN FLATTS, May 2d 1781

ALBANY 24th August 1780

MY DEAR SIR,

We have just received an Express from Tryon County, from Col. Harper, who mentioned that a Man employed by Genl. Rensselaer to gett intelligence, informs him that Sir John Johnson has sent a party into Johnstown, to inform the Inhabitants that he is coming on with about 2000 men, and intends making his first stroke at Stone Arabia. That the Inhabitants at Johnson's Bush have baked a Quantity of Bread for the use of Sir John's men. The General intends

going immediately to Schenectady to have Scouts continually out.

Genl. Ten Broeck will put the Militia of his Brigade (at least such a part as may be necessary) under marching Orders, to march at a moment's warning; by the Information, Sir John was to have been at Johnstown yesterday. He will order Col. Harper to Johnson's Bush, and if any Bread can be found seize it, and the Persons who have it. His Reason for taking Post at Schenectady is that in case there is any truth in the account that he may collect a force in Person, an Endeavor to confute the designs of the Enemy. The Genl. would have wrote himself, but is gone to confer with Genl. Ten Broeck. I am Dr Sir with much esteem your mo't Ob't Humble Servant,

LEWIS R. MORRIS.

GOV'R CLINTON

In October of the same year, Sir John, after a devastating raid of the settlements at Schoharie, struck the Mohawk Valley in the vicinity of Fort Hunter on the 17th, and there continued the work of destruction. All now remaining of Caughnawaga was put to the flames, and still upward the army marched, sorrow following in its train. The banks of the Mohawk were illuminated by the light of the blazing buildings.

Sir John was pursued by General Robert Van Rensselaer at the head of the Claverack and Schenectady militia. This officer commanded Col. John Brown, then in charge of Fort Paris, a small stockade at Stone Arabia, to march out to

check the enemy's advance, with assurance that he would receive support.

This brave young man, an accomplished lawyer, a man of Massachusetts birth, on that day attained to his thirty-sixth year. Marching at the head of his little company, he encountered two women fleeing from an Indian. The savage red man brought down one of them with his musket, and was about to scalp her when the militia fire rang out. This brought on a general engagement, and the Colonel fell at the head of his brave troops. The rest (forty to forty-five of whom were slain), too feeble to resist, now sought safety in flight or continued a scattering fire from the shade of sheltering rocks.

The firing had not yet ceased when General Van Rensselaer arrived at the fording place across the Mohawk nearly opposite the battle scene. Meeting some of the fugitives, he accepted the offer of an officer named Van Allen to pilot him across the river. First moved over, in expectation of the advance of the main body, the commands of McKean and "Colonel Louis," the Oneida chief, when to the surprise of all, General Van Rensselaer gave up the attempt, and with Colonel Dubois of the State levies rode off to Fort Plain for dinner.

At 4 P.M. when the last man had crossed the river, the General arrived and was hailed as a Tory by Louis, the Oneida chief, as the latter shook his sword. Colonel Harper, too, remonstrated on the needless delay.



<sup>1</sup> "Leaving Stone Arabia a desert," Sir John continued his march to a point called "Klock's Field." Here his fatigued troops rested on a fine plain by the riverside and threw up a small breast-work. The Indians were posted near at hand in a grove of scrub oak.

Now came up the fresh troops of General Van Rensselaer, 15,000 strong. The Indians, soon driven from their position, fled to the fording place, and thence toward the Susquehanna. At nightfall the British works were carried. At this point the order came from General Van Rensselaer to fall back and encamp.

Many of the militia refused to obey. Colonel Clyde and Colonel Louis and Captain McKean hung about the enemy's line and made a few prisoners. In the morning, Colonel Van Rensselaer advanced to the attack, but it was too late. The British army had made good its escape.

Said Major Sammons:

When my father's buildings were burned, and my brothers taken prisoners, the pain I felt was not as great as at the conduct of Genl. Robert Van Rensselaer.<sup>2</sup>

On the 9th of August, 1781, John Dockstader entered the Mohawk Valley at Currytown, at the

<sup>1</sup> Stone, *Life of Joseph Brant*, vol. ii., p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> At the court-martial inquiry regarding the case, General Van Rensselaer was exonerated from blame, and his conduct characterized as at all times that of a "good, active, faithful, prudent and spirited officer."

head of about 500 Indians and Tories. The people, not anticipating danger, were, for the most part at work in the fields or in their homes. The red men plundered and burned all houses except that of a Tory, killed and scalped several people, and took several captives.

On the same day, it chanced that Captain Gros had been despatched from Fort Plain by Colonel Willett in search of provisions and possible foes. Happening upon the enemy's trail, he sent two of his best men to make observations. They discovered the late camping-place and a few Indians cooking food for the return of their comrades. Word was sent to Colonel Willett, who at once forwarded troops. These met the enemy at the present town of Sharon.

By means of decoys, sent to draw the enemy's fire and then retreat, Willett brought on an engagement which proved disastrous to his foes. His own men had previously been stationed behind trees and logs, and reserved their fire until it could be most effective.

At the end of two hours, the Loyalist party beat a retreat. The Indians, fearing to lose their prisoners, who had been tied to trees during the engagement, now killed all but two and took their scalps. When Willett's men came up, they buried the bodies and left them. One of those thus buried, a lad named Jacob Diefendorf, survived the scalping and, recovering consciousness, and finding the covering over him but slight, managed

to crawl out. He was afterward found and cared for, and lived to a ripe old age.

The following endearing message explains itself.

Proclamation by Sir John Johnson to the People on the Mohawk River.

The Officers and Soldiers of Sir John Johnson's Regt. present their affectionate and loving wishes to their Friends and Relations on the Mohawk River and earnestly entreat them to assemble themselves and come into Canada or the upper Posts, where under that Gallant leader they may assist their Countrymen to quell and put an end to the present unnatural Rebellion in hopes soon to return to their native homes, there to enjoy the happiness they were formerly blessed with under the best of Kings, who is willing to do everything for his subjects.

May 22nd 1781

Late in October of the same year, the loving Sir John descended with his troops upon Warrensbush near the junction of the Schoharie with the Mohawk. Learning of his approach, a scouting party left Johnstown under Captain John Little, and came upon the advance guard of the enemy near Tribes Hill. Finding the number large, they returned to Johnstown to give the alarm.

The army of Sir John consisted of four companies of the Royal Greens, Colonel Butler's Rangers, and two hundred Indians, one thousand men in all. From Warrensbush, Sir John pursued his usual work of destruction on the south side of the river.

Colonel Willett, stationed at Fort Rensselaer, some twenty miles west of Warrensbush, at once started for Fort Hunter on learning of the enemy's presence there,—Willett having in all, including his own garrison and such militia as he could collect, 416 men. Before Willett's arrival, the enemy had decamped and was, even then, at Johnstown, burning, destroying, imprisoning, and killing.

Major Rowley was now detached from Colonel Willett's force that he might attack the British army in the rear, while Colonel Willett, with his small command, boldly advanced to meet the enemy. Both sides fought bravely for some time, when our militia, suddenly panic-stricken, turned and fled in confusion into the old stone church. The British soldiers, elated with the prospect of victory, scattered in pursuit of stragglers. At this propitious moment they were attacked in the rear by Major Rowley. Willett now succeeded in rallying his men. The battle was renewed and fought with bravery on both sides until dark, when the enemy, sorely pressed, beat a retreat.

Some of the militia, under Colonel Willett, followed, coming up with the British troops at West Canada Creek. On crossing the creek, Walter Butler rallied his men, and a short, sharp conflict ensued between the two armies, standing on opposite sides.

A rifle shot brought down Walter Butler; and an Oneida Indian, casting aside his blanket and rifle,



swam the stream, tomahawk in hand, to scalp him. "Spare me, give me quarter!" cried Butler.

"*Remember Sherry Valley!*" was the reply, and the tomahawk sank into the Tory's brain. Appealing to his chieftain, Colonel Louis, the Oneida asked permission, by signs, to scalp. Colonel Louis gave but an approving look, and the bloody deed was done.

<sup>1</sup> "So perished Walter N. Butler, one of the greatest scourges, as he was one of the most fearless men, of his native country."

The Battle of Johnstown is known as the last battle of the Revolutionary War. It was fought on the 25th day of October, 1781, six days after the surrender of Cornwallis, which was not yet known in that part of the State.

Extract from Colonel Willett's letter:

FORT RENSSELAER, 2d November 1781.

TRYON COUNTY ORDERS:

Colonel Willett presents his thanks to Major Rowley and the Officers and Soldiers under his command and for their Services since they have been upon the frontier and Especially to those few troops of this Corps who were with Major Rowley in the Action of the 25th Ultimo at Johnstown, whose Bravery Demands Particular Acknowledgments.

The Companies of Captains Marsh, Clark and Hecoeks are discharged, as the time for which they were engaged is Expired.

The Officers Commanding those Companies will

<sup>1</sup> Stone, *Life of Joseph Brant*, vol. ii., p. 193.

see that the men deliver their Ammunition to the Commissary of Ordnance at Fort Rensselaer.

Particular thanks are given to the Militia of this County, for their Alertness in Turning out to Oppose the Enemy in their late Incursion upon these frontiers. Colonel Willett feels happy, whilst he is Compelled in the strongest terms to testify his Approbation of the behavior of those few brave men amongst them which Composed a part of the left wing that so Nobly fought and Repulsed the Enemy in the Action of the 25th Ultimo at Johnstown, it gives him Particular Pleasure to Acknowledge his Obligations to those few Choice Souls who went out with him into the Wilderness, in pursuit of the Enemy. To the men of Colonel Bellinger's Regt. Commanded by Major Copeman, to the men of Colonel Visscher's Regt. Commanded by Lt. Col. Veder, and to those few Militia from Schenectady Commanded by Captain Fonda.

The success that has Attended this march must be sufficient Compensation for their Great Toil and the Consequences very Beneficial to these frontiers. The Spirit that has been Exhibited upon this Occasion must Convince the Enemy that these are People not to be Trifled with, and will Undoubtedly damp that Dirty spirit of Enterprize that can have nothing but the Destruction of Individuals for its Object.

The Particular attention, great Diligence and manly Deportment of Andrew Finck Esquire through the whole of this Affair (who performed the service of Brigade Major), merits everything that can be said in his praise. He is Requested to Accept of this Sincere Acknowledgment of his Services.

The Patience and Fortitude that has Discovered

itself in the officers and Soldiers of the Levies throughout the whole of this fatigue does them great Honor. And the few Artillery men, under the Command of Capt. Moody with the Rest of his Officers who Voluntarily became Musqueteers that they might participate in these Toils, merits Particular Applause.

The pale moon rises, looking down  
While the night mist shrouds the sleeping town,  
And always under the arching skies,  
Silent and peaceful our "battlefield" lies.

No sound is heard, save the gentle breeze  
Whispering softly to the trees,  
Nothing to speak of the strife and woe  
On this "battlefield" in the "long ago."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PIPE OF PEACE

Buried was the bloody hatchet,  
Buried was the dreadful war-club,  
Buried were all war-like weapons  
And the war-cry was forgotten.

LONGFELLOW.

TRYON County was desolate indeed. Homes were in ruins, crops were destroyed, husbands and fathers were slain. Brothers, sons, kinsmen, old neighbors and friends had deserted the cause and now found refuge in Canada. Their confiscated estates had been assigned to new owners.

But war was at an end. Widows, orphans, and parents were left to mourn their dead, rebuild their ruined homesteads, and rebind the broken threads of life. The peaceful Oneida returned to his reservation, and the warlike Mohawk deserted his native hills for the northern home of his forefathers, to found a new Caughnawaga upon the banks of the St. Lawrence. The new-born republic thrived. With returning peace new





The Johnstown Battle Monument  
Erected by Johnstown Chapter, D. A. R., August 31, 1901  
Photograph by Eaton



usages came into being, modern to the people of the day, fascinatingly ancient to us of the present. Still bands of Indians and Tories prowled about the valley. Such a party burned a grist-mill at Little Falls in June, 1782, and, shortly after, appearing in large numbers, pursued several families to Fort Herkimer, shooting Augustinus Hess as he reached the gate and torturing and killing another prisoner, Valentine Staring, within hearing of the fort. About the same time three prisoners were taken in the vicinity of Johnstown, and Nicholas Stoner was scalped, dying from his wounds.

For several years vague rumors prevailed that ghosts haunted the old homesteads of the Loyalists. Ghosts of dead hopes indeed they were, for thus did the Tories, "the blue-eyed Indians," revisit the valley under the shadows of night and gather up their long hidden possessions. So bitter was the feeling of their patriotic kinsmen against them that not one dare openly return for many years. Such a ghost in vain haunted Guy Park, but a flesh and blood stranger at last materialized, stopping at the door and requesting permission to sleep in the haunted room. He disappeared before daylight. When the house was afterward remodelled, small secret drawers were found in the ceiling, from which, no doubt, on this occasion, valuables and papers were removed. The ghost never again appeared.

We may now suppose the people at leisure to

review the bloody scenes through which they had been passing and to set forth their needs or consider such claims as the following:

DEAR SIR:

The great distance which Your duty calls us appart oblige me at this time to give you this trouble which Otherwise I would not. You may Remember Agreeable to your promise. I was to have an Order for Eight yards of Broad-Cloath, on the Commissary for Cloathing of this State—In lieu of my Blue Cloak, which was Used for Coulours at Fort Schuyler—An Opportunity Now presenting itself—I beg you to find me an Order, inclosed to M Jeremiah Renseler, pay Master, at Albany, or to Mr. Henry Van Vaughter, Albany, when I will receive it and you will oblige me,—who will Always Acknowledge the favor with true gratitude—

Please to make my Comp<sup>ts</sup> to the Other Officers of the Regim't—

I am Dear Sir  
Your

Poughkeepsie }  
29th Aug 1778 }

ABRAHAM SWARTOUT *Capt*

COLONEL PETER GANSUVORTH.

The physicians' bills for services proclaim their own story of suffering. Moses Younglove, probably after his return from captivity, issued the following:

Rec'd Williger October 16, 1779, of Christopher



Fox Esq. 8 dollars in full for curing his arm of a wound received in Oriska fight.

MOSES YOUNGLOVE.

From a copy of Doctor Petrie's account presented to the State of New York, 1781.

The following persons are debtors to Wm. Petree, Surgeon, being wounded by the cruel and merciless savages and companies, enemies of America.

1777 August the 6th Colonel Vols, Ranger of Capt. Bradley's Company; wounded with a Ball and two Book shott, under my attendance six weeks, dressed twice a day.

£3 10

1779 May 10th, the wife of Jost Smith and the wife of Henry Widerstyn, scalped, under my attendance eleven months, dressed twice a day.

£30 00

July 9th, Jost Vols, wounded in the thigh, and arms with a ball, 3 book shott and a cut with a hatchet under my care six weeks dressed twice a day

£4 10

Catharine Dornberger, scalped, and stapped with a spear on five sundry places, dressed twice a day

£16 00

1780 August 8th, John Dachstader and Conrad Vols, both wounded with Bok shot, under my care 30 days.

£3 00

Sept. 1st Jacob Ittig, wounded, dressed twice a day 40 days.

£5 10

31 Christian Shell, wounded through his arm, dressed twice a day 24 days.

£2 10

October 29th Adam Hartman and John Demood, each with a ball, under my care 3 months, dressed twice a day

£18 00

1781 Febr. 6th Peter Davis, fort surprised and three of his daughters wounded, one staped three time and a cut with a hatchet, under my care five weeks, dressed twice a day

£10 10

May 28th Nath Shoemaker, wounded with a ball through his breast, dressed twice a day for eight weeks.

£4 10

Abm. Wohleber, scalped, and two scalps taken at one time, under my care one year, dressed twice a day

£20 00

Jun 24th—Frederick Shell wounded with a ball through his thigh, dressed twice a day, 2 months.

4 00

---

£121 10

On April 17, 1783, orders from General Washington reached Fort Plain that a messenger be sent from that point to Oswego to arrange for the cessation of hostilities.

Captain Thompson, appointed by Major Finck, with four attendants and laden with messages for lost friends of the colonists believed to be in

Canada, started on his mission on the morning of April 18th. After a journey full of romantic interest and a courteous reception by the British officers, he returned in safety to Fort Plain.

Washington himself visited the upper valley in the same year, having made a similar trip to Schenectady in 1782. Several pretty incidents of both these occasions have been recorded.

"Smiling through their tears," the people of old Tryon cast off the name of the erstwhile governor (a strong Loyalist) and, in honor of Gen. Richard Montgomery, rechristened the county Montgomery on the 2d day of April, 1784.

Still, for many years, the thunders of the departing storm might be heard re-echoing among the hills. The appended claims and petitions of the day record sundry losses incurred.

£4—

FORT PLAIN 19th August 1781

Received from Colonel Marenus Willett one Milk Cow it being in Lieu for that was killed for the use of the Troops of this Post.

his  
GOSSAN X VAN D. WORKIN  
mark

Received Fort Plain 21st August 1781 of Timothy Hutton Lieut and Quarter Master protempory one mare and colt in Lieu of a Horse that was Lost in Public Service.

BASTIAN FRANCE.

Received Fort Rensselaer 25th Sept 1781 from  
Colonel M. Willett a Brown horse in Lieu of a Horse  
of mine killed in the Action of the 10th of July past  
which horse was Appraised by two parsons under  
Oath at Twenty Five Pounds New York Currency

his

JOSEPH X MABEE  
mark

State of New York to Lawrence Gros Dr  
1781 To a Saddle lost in public Service as Col.  
Oct 25 Willett's Certificate in a Battle with { £4-1  
the Enemy

Peter Hansen presents long and minute account of damages sustained by the enemy's raids, including hay, wheat, oats in quantity, flax, hemp, "one green Bagg," "3 feather Bedds," "9 Coverlids, homemaid," "1 looking-glass, 1 Tea Kettle, 1 Iron Waggon, 1 Plow and harness,— 1 Negro Man,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 1 negro,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 1 wench."

In other accounts we see such odd items as:

Articles of  
Life Stock

One Negro Man  
Two Negro Wenches  
One Negro Boy  
Five Horses.

2 Cows and 4 Hogs Kilt.

Abraham Quackenbos claims the loss of

one Suffeciant Dwelling House, made of Brick and an Antri to the Same with a Good Sufficient Cellar underneath with a shingle roff the House is 24 feet





The Old Church at Stone Arabia

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox



Long and 22 feet Width and another House of 18 feet Long and 15 feet Wide

and his Moveable effects and other necessities of Life to tedious to mention

also 5 sheep Burnt in his Brother's Barn

one Barn of 45 Long and 40 wide All Boarded all round having straw roof with all other utensils belonging to a Barn such as Wind Mills and other things to tedious to mention.

150 sheeple of Apples

100     "     "     wheat

burnt 60 Sheeple of Peas—and quantities of oats, hay and flax.

John B. Wemple complains of the destruction of his

Dwelling, 'Barn, Barracks, My Part in a Brewery, One Black Smith's Shop with two sets of Tools.

|             |   |               |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| Articles of | } | Two Negro Men |
|             |   | Two Milk Cows |
| Live Stock  |   | Three Horses  |

Cloathing, Household Furniture and other Utensils.

Henry Herter's loss consisted of large quantities of pease, wheat, oats, hay.

One Dwelling House and Kitchen—Household Furniture, One Horse, Ten Head of Horn Cattle, Three Sheep, One Loom and Slay.

The effects of Johannes E. Van Epps were burned by the enemy, namely:

Grist mill with contents, Two other Dwelling Houses, quantities of grain, One Barrack, One Cow Killed, About Six Loades of Hay.

All of which are but examples taken at random, for no county suffered more severely than did old Tryon, from the ravages of war.

Jelles Fonda's Acct Of the Damages done by the Enemy in Tryon County.

at Caughnawaga May 22d 1780 and in October 18

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| One Dwelling House                     | £700  |
| The Furniture in D &c &c               | 200   |
| Grane and farming Youstansels          | 160   |
| A Barn Potash Works and out Houses     | 110   |
| Pot Ash Solts and Ashes                | 470   |
| The Half of a Brew House               | 60    |
| Three Negro Men of the best kind       | 280   |
| Two Horses of the best                 | 50    |
| Four Hogs and Three Cattle             | 19    |
| at the Nose Octo' 18th 1780            |       |
| My Dwelling House                      | 1000  |
| About Twelve Hundred Scip of Grane     | 240   |
| Two Barns and Three other out Houses   | 200   |
| Furniture and farming Youstansels      | 150   |
| A large Gress Mill the Flower therein  | 400   |
| Two Negroes and a Negro Wench          | 210   |
| Three Horses                           | 30    |
| Eleaven head of Cattle Poltry &c       | 50    |
| About One Hundred and Ten Loads of Hay | 110   |
|  | <hr/> |
|  | £4519 |

JELLES FONDA.



An Account of Damages sustained by Jacob Dieffendorf Jun of the Enemy July 7th 1780 at Corry Town in the County of Tryon in the State of New York viz—

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| one Dwelling House one Kitchen and<br>one Barn       | £100- 0-0 |
| Six Horses Collectively                              | £100- 0-0 |
| one Cow, one ox                                      | 10- 0-0   |
| Eight Sheep @ 20                                     | £ 8- 0-0  |
| Twenty five Gees @ 4                                 | £ 5- 0-0  |
| Sixteen hides collectively                           | 8-12-0    |
| one Negroe Slave                                     | 75- 0-0   |
| household and furniture utensils &c.<br>collectively | 24- 8-0   |
|  | <hr/>     |
|  | £331- 0-0 |

JACOB DIEFENDORFF, JR.

The loss sustained by Conraed Steen at Warrensborough, October 26, 1781, consisted of:

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| 1 Beaver Hat                   |
| 1 Pair of Linen Stockings      |
| 1 D of Worsted "               |
| 1 " " Linen "                  |
| " " Woolen "                   |
| 1 " " Mens Shoes               |
| 1 Long Woman's Cloak           |
| 1 Callimanco Woman's Petticoat |
| 1 Do Do Do                     |
| 1 Cotton Handkerchief          |
| 1 Cambric Handkerchief         |
| 1 Callico Short Gound          |
| 7 Ribons Various Sorts         |

Isaac Elwood came before me Henry Walrath Esq' one of the Justices of the County of Montgomery of the State of New York, and made and Oath that he was examined by Abraham Ten Broeck and Peter Ganseforth Esq' appointed by the State for that Purpose, obtained a Certificate or had his Certificate examined and Contrasigned healding forth that he had served as *Corporal* in Captain Henry Diefendorff's Company in the Regiment of Militia commanded by Colonel Cox that he was wounded in his right Shoulder at Arisa on the Sixth Day of August 1777 and that he now lived in the District of Canajohery and in the County of Montgomery State of New York May the 19th Day 1789

Sworn be for me

HENRY WALRATH, *Justice.*

George Dunkill came before me John Jacob Diefendorf Esquire one of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Montgomery in the State of New York and made Oath that he was examined by Abraham Ten Broeck and Philip Schuyler Esquires appointed by the said States for that purpose—obtained a Certificate setting forth that he had served as Private in the Regiment of Militia commanded by Col<sup>o</sup> Samuel Clyde and that he was disabled by a Wound Shot in the right eye in an action near Torlach in the said County on the 10th of July 1781, and that he now lives in the said County, the District of Canajoharry

Sworn before me the }

17 Day of May 1799 }

JOHN JACOB DIEFENDORFF, *Justice.*

his

GEORGE X DUNKILL

mark

## The Pipe of Peace

241

HARKEMERS TOWN December 15 1791

I hereby Certify that Markes Petri has been Employed With Waggon and horses by order of General Herkermer to transport provisions for the use of the army under his Command at the Battle of Orisko, the 6th August 1777 and that his Horses and gear was taken by the Enemy in said Battle.

PETER BELLINGER, *Col.*

Widow of Uriel Combs, Montgomery County.

I do hereby certify that Uriel Combs late Sergeant in the Regiment of Militia in the said County (late the County of Tryon) under my Command was on the sixth day of August 1777 Killed in the field in an action with the Enemy at orisca, and that he left a widow, who is still unmarried. I do also certify that Christiana Combs widow of the said Uriel Combs is intitled to the provision made by the Law for the Relief of Widows and orphans of officers and Soldiers of the Line of this State and of the Militia of the same—

Given under my Hand,

JACOB KLOCK, *Coll.*

Received 26th March

1785.

Thoroughly to understand how terrible and how lasting the effects of the war upon the denizens of the valley, let us take a peep a generation ahead and read the notice printed in the *Political Atlas*, published in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

SCHENECTADY, June 8, 1807.

On Thursday, the 4th inst. about four miles from the city of Schenectady, aside of the Mohawk

turnpike, sitting under a tree, I discovered Petrus Groot, who was supposed to have been slain in the Oriskany battle, under Gen. Herkimer, on the 6th of August, in the year 1777. I immediately recognized him, and on conversing with him, he confessed himself to be the person I took him to be. I then carried him to the nearest tavern where I left him to be sent to his children and brothers, from whence, however, he departed before day the next morning and was seen in Albany on Friday. His mental faculties are much impaired supposed to have been occasioned by a wound of a tomahawk near the fore part of his head, though he is, at most times, tolerably rational. His head is bald, the circle or scar of the scalping-knife is plainly to be seen on it as also a stab on the side of his neck, near the shoulder, and a small scar near the circle. . . . He speaks English, French, Dutch and Indian, and says he has been last a prisoner among the Indians north of Quebec. Had on an old dark gray coat, old brownish pantaloons and has a large pack with him. He refused to go home, as one of his former neighbors would not recognize him, he was fearful his children and brothers would not. He said he would go to the Governor's. Being at times deranged, it is feared he will stray away too far for his friends to find him. He is of a very respectable family and connections.

The printers in this and neighboring States are requested to give this a few insertions in their papers, to aid in restoring a poor sufferer to his children and friends, who has been thirty years a prisoner among the Indians. He is now sixty-five years of age. He was a Lieutenant in the militia at the time he was supposed to have been slain. JOHN SANDERS



It is not strange that bitter feeling against the Loyalists long ran high and that on May 9, 1793, the people of Mohawk district

Resolved unanimously that all those who have gone off to the enemy or have been banished by any law of this state or those who we shall find tarried as spies or tools of the enemy and encouraged or harbored those who went away shall not live in this district on any pretense whatever, and as for those who have washed their faces from Indian paint and their hands from the innocent blood of our dear ones, and have returned, either openly or covertly, we warn them to leave this district before the 20th of June next, or they must expect to feel the just resentment of an injured and determined people.

We likewise unanimously desire our brethren in the other districts in this county to join with us to consent to the repealing of any law made for the safety of the state against treason or confiscation of traitors' estates or to passing any new acts for the return or restitution of Tories.

By order of the meeting, JOSIAH THROOP, *chairman*.

A treaty was held with the Six Nations on December 2, 1784, at Fort Stanwix. The two principal Indian speakers on this occasion were the chiefs, Cornplanter and Red Jacket. The former influenced his people for peace, but the latter threw the weight of his opinion against it. Matters were amicably terminated by a feast and a foot race.

In 1785 the Tuscaroras and Oneidas ceded to

New York State all land lying between the Chenango and Unadilla rivers. The deed of the Oneida Reservation was given September 22, 1788.

The people were now well established in the employments of agriculture and commerce. Trade had not been quite at a standstill even during the Revolutionary period, as witness the following, signed by familiar names.

GERMAN FLATTS, June 5th 1777.

Rec'd of Jelles Fonda, the sum of ten pounds, nine shillings, in full for 8c 2 qr. 15 lb. flour, and riding the same two miles (at the carrying-place around the falls) for public use.

AUGUSTINUS HESS.

GERMAN FLATTS, 1777, June 5th

Rec'd of Jelles Fonda, the sum of two pounds, twelve shillings, in full for twenty-six schepel potatoes.

JOHN JOST HARCHYMAR.

Thomas Cunningham was another early merchant of German Flats numbering among his customers such distinguished people as Henry Herkimer and Rev. Abraham Rosencrantz, the latter purchasing, in 1778, "skeins of silk, black lace, powder and shot, a half paper of pins, half pound of snuff, etc."

In 1785 Abraham Van Epps built a log cabin at the mouth of Oriskany creek and opened trade with passers-by. He would also make trips to

the Oneida castle, staying three or four days with the Indians there and bartering from his ample pack of trinkets. This well-known pioneer merchant, born 1763, was the son and namesake of Abraham Van Epps of Schenectady, once a prosperous fur trader of that place, but who had been plundered while on a trading trip to the northern lakes.

Isaac Paris, the second son of the colonel of that name so barbarously tortured after the battle of Oriskany, removed in 1787 from Stone Arabia to his father's lands at Fort Plain,—the former property of Lieutenant-Governor George Clarke. This Isaac Paris was a young man much esteemed in his county, which he thrice represented as legislator.

Upon the Indian trail leading to the Susquehanna, one-half mile west of the Indian castle *Tah-ragh-jo-res* on Prospect Hill, and three miles from the historic castle upon Otsongo Creek, Mr. Paris erected a home, and there carried on trade with the Indians.

This historic wooden building is still standing and has received in its day many distinguished guests. The Indian chiefs, Cornplanter and Joseph Brant, Col. Marinus Willett and Baron Steuben are said to have been among them and it was doubtless visited by many other eminent people of the time.

James Van Horne, already a prosperous merchant at German Flats before the Revolutionary

War, was still stationed there at its close; and among the items sold were "ells of corduroy, ells of blue shalloon, one quarte Cyder, one pound hog's fat, snuff and *one* Nip of grog" (several times repeated). These accounts were not all paid in money,—sometimes it was in ginseng. One gentleman made up his deficit by "playing the fittle."

About 1790, the Kane brothers started store-keeping in the old Van Alstyne building at Canajoharie. Their stone dwelling was known as Round Top, from its arched roof.

It is recorded that an Indian who once came to this store, after being well cut down in the prices of his furs, invested liberally in rum. He was then charged one dollar each for needles for his squaw, after he had been informed that the only man who could make such needles had passed from life.

Of this Mr. Kane, an English traveller of the period, Mr. Maude, tells us:

Mr. J. Kane took in the course of last fall and winter 3,400 bushels of wheat which were bought on an average of one dollar and 55<sup>c</sup> per bushel,—51000 dollars and sold at N. Y. for one dollar and ninety-three and  $\frac{3}{4}$  65,875. Took in potash 2500 bushels worth on an average \$25. per bushel, \$62,500.

Mr. Kane kindly insisted on my passing the evening and taking a bed at his house to which invitation I readily yielded. While we were engaged in a bottle of claret, my servant was jockeying for a horse, the





The Isaac Paris House

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox



bargain was soon made and I paid down the money he demanded, 65 dollars, 50 cents.

James and Archibald Kane then ran this store, keeping "the best assortment of European and West India goods, to be found west of Schenectady."

A souvenir of a store kept in 1792 at German Flats is in existence. It reads:

No. 12—One Penny. The Bearer shall receive One Penny at my store at Fort Herkimer on demand—Value received. 16th January 1792. N. ALDRIDGE.

On the 20th of October, 1780, during one of Sir John Johnson's raids, two historic churches were burned,—the one at Fort Plain known as the Sand Hill Church, and the one at Stone Arabia. The latter was again erected in 1788. The following curious document relating to the pastor's compensation has been preserved.

Know all men by these presents that we the subscribers am held and firmly bound unto the said Drusteis of the Luteran Church in Paletine for ever third Sontay to pay him twenty-five currency yearly from the First of September in the year of Our Lort 1797, and to Find him the third of the Firewood and likewise the Fansing and twenty skippels of whead Yearly.

The "Sand Hill" Church, formally known as the First Reformed Dutch Church of Canajoharie was rebuilt at the close of the war. From the time of its destruction until its rebuilding, Dominie Gros,

its pastor, preached in a barn. The new church was erected under contract with one Peter Marsh for one thousand pounds. It was a substantial wooden building, boasting an old-fashioned pulpit with a sounding-board and a short bench for the use of the pastor. The church had galleries on three sides and a steeple without a bell. Preaching was in German.

The Old Fort Herkimer Church adopted, in 1796, the corporate name "The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of German Flatts." The Rev. A. Rosencrantz here preached from 1767 till 1794. His death occurred in 1796. He was followed to his grave by one hundred and twenty double sleighs. The interment was made within the walls of his church, near the pulpit. Some mementoes of his administration may be found in the following:

Received of Dederich Fox and John Frank Esqs.  
Trustees of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church  
of the German Flatts District in the County of  
Montgomery the Sum of Two Pound Two Shillings  
and Sixpence For Feed of Justice and Jurors attending  
a court held at the house of Capt Jacob Devendorph,  
Sept 29th 1784

I say by me

JACOB DIEFENDORF.

(Reverse side.)

JACOB DEFFENDORPH

Receipt to

Frederick Fox and

John Frank.

£2: 2: 6

Sept 29 1784



In 1747 the consistory of the church audited the following account of the expenses of John Frank and Rudolph Steele who had been appointed a committee to transact business at Albany.

1797

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Feb'y 7 To liquors at different places  | £0- 4-0       |
| 8 Paid John Fonday for 3 sup, 3 quarts<br>cider, 3 lodgings and ½ gill gin                          | £0-10-6       |
| 9 Paid Johnson, Schenectady, 1 grog,<br>1 lodging, 1 supper, 1 glass bitters<br>and stage to Albany | -7-6<br>-8-0  |
|   | <hr/> £0-15-6 |
| To and in Albany 2 dinners and 1 glass<br>punch   | 0-9-0         |
| To cash paid Barber the printer   | 3-3-0         |
| To cash paid Myers for getting the<br>paper from New York   | 0-8-0         |
| From 10th to 16th included to sundries<br>in liquors  | 0-8-0         |
| To 7½ days boarding and liquors at<br>Craine's in Albany as per receipt                             | 5-11-0        |
| To bread and cheese for me on the way<br>home   | 2             |
| Liquors to Schenectady  | 0-4-6         |
| At Alsober's Schenectady for liquors and<br>lodgings  | 0-3-0         |
| To expenses in liquors from Schenectady<br>to home  | 0-7-0         |

The Palatine Stone Church, the Fort Herkimer Church, the St. Johnsville Church, the Caugh-

nawaga Church and the Old Dutch Church at Schenectady had all, for one reason or another, survived the devastation of the Revolutionary War.

At Schenectady handsome and costly brass chandeliers (*Groote Kroon* and *Kleyndere Kroon*), the gifts of pious parishioners, Nicholas Van der Volgen and wife contributed to the furnishing of the edifice, while in 1794

The consistory take into consideration the defective condition of the Dutch Psalmody in the public worship of this church;

*Resolved*, that Cornelis De Graaf, the chorister, shall use his endeavors in each family of this village and elsewhere, to obtain pupils in singing on condition that each shall pay one shilling and six pence a month the Consistory also adding thereto for each scholar for the term of six months, one shilling and six pence a month; provided a certificate be shown to the consistory signed by Mr. De Graaf that each scholar has diligently spent his time as he ought.

Also Mr. De Graaf in singing shall try to observe the measure of the half notes and soften his voice as much as possible.

It is said that the above-named gentleman's voice could be distinctly heard for a distance of two miles up the river.

On March 7, 1788, Montgomery County was officially declared to be bounded on the east by the counties of Ulster, Albany, Washington, and



The Gros Homestead, built by Rev. Johann Daniel Gros, shortly after the Revolutionary War

Photograph by Wesley H. Fox





Clinton; on the south by the State of Pennsylvania, and on the west and north by the boundaries of the State of New York. At the same time, the town of Whitestown was formed from the town of Herkimer. Montgomery County now contained the towns of Whitestown, German Flats, Canajoharie, Otsego, Harpersfield, Mohawk, Herkimer, Palatine, Caughnawaga. On February 16, 1791, Herkimer County was formed from Montgomery.

## CHAPTER X

### NEW ENGLAND PIONEERS

Right-handed men, whichever hand you shook,  
Square-stepping men, whichever way they took,  
Stout-hearted men, whatever might betide,  
For duty ready till the day they died.

BENJAMIN F. TAYLOR.

A NEW element was now entering into Mohawk Valley life. The enterprising New Englander, fighting side by side with his Dutch and German brothers in the battles of the infant republic, had not failed to cast a shrewd eye upon the teeming beauties of our lovely vale. From a somewhat bleaker climate he emigrated to the "Great West" of Oneida County. The mammoth wagons in which these incoming settlers moved their families and furniture aroused no little interest and created no little amusement in the valleys of the Hudson and the Mohawk. Along the old Indian trail they came,—trails which were afterward improved and promoted into turnpikes and roads. By boat, too, they journeyed, by way of Schenectady, their cattle



"To Commemorate the Founding of Whitestown "

Photograph by A. E. Aldridge





driven beside them along the shore. Beyond and among the early pale faces they settled with true pluck and amazing energy. Land was then to be purchased at from ten cents to one dollar an acre.

It is true that as early as 1760 there were settled at Fort Stanwix several families of German descent named Roof, Brodock, Kline, Steers, De Grow, and Reggins—the remains of whose little clearing might still be seen in 1877, in ditches, gardens, etc. Two of the men, Messrs. Roof and Brodock, were engaged in the Indian trade and in assisting traders at the carrying place, and Mr. Roof kept an inn. All these families were driven out by the thunderclaps of the approaching storm of war that burst over Fort Stanwix at the time of the Battle of Oriskany.

In 1773, too, Germans from the Mohawk River, —George J. Weaver, Capt. Mark Damoth, and Christian Reall,—started a little log-house settlement in the present town of Deerfield. Being patriots, they were marks for the Tories and Mohawk Indians during the bloody days so soon to follow. In the summer of 1776, a friendly Indian named Blue-back was met by a party of such marauders, inquiring the way to the clearing. Stealing away, he gave warning to his friends, who managed to make their escape, the women and children in a wagon, the men on foot, to a little fort called "Little Stone Arabia" in the present town of Schuyler. Some of their furniture they

managed to conceal in the forest, but the little settlement soon went up in smoke.

It is Hugh White, however, to whom the honor belongs of having established the first permanent white settlement in Oneida County. This gentleman, together with three others—Zephaniah Platt, Ezra L'Hommedieu, and Melancthon Smith—immediately after the Revolution came into possession of Sadaquada Patent. In June, 1784, Mr. White ascended the Mohawk River and erected a temporary shelter at the mouth of the Sadaquada Creek until a division of the lands was made. He then built a log house on the present Whitestown village green. Here he remained during the winter with his four grown sons, a daughter and a daughter-in-law, effecting a clearing, and, in the spring, returned to Connecticut for his wife and other members of the family. At about this time a New England neighbor with a speculative eye to the possibilities of Oneida County asked whether rye might be raised there. "I don't know," answered Mr. White, "wheat is good enough for me."

The family had been established in their new home barely four months when they were honored with the presence of an unexpected and distinguished guest, General Lafayette, who was on his way to Fort Stanwix to be present at the treaty between the American government and the Six Nations. It would require no great stretch of imagination to picture the consternation of the

good hostess. No butcher, no baker at hand, no time to shoot game or catch fish, but she was equal to the occasion. No better Johnny-cake than hers could be baked the country round, and no one knew how to fry the pork to a finer golden brown. Forty years after, when as the guest of the nation Lafayette visited Whitestown, he inquired whether the maker of the Johnny-cake was still living. The meal had been a success.

The first year or two of the family's stay they were glad to salt down a barrel or two of pigeons' breasts to eke out their supply of animal food.

The nearest mill was then at Palatine.

Five miles to meeting, forty miles to mill,  
They backed the grist and travelled with a will,  
By bridle-path and trail and bark canoe,  
Dim as the twilight, noiseless as the dew,  
Then back they came, the bright day turning brown  
And met the swarthy Mohawk coming down.

Nevertheless, many of the settlers did their own milling, pounding the corn in a mortar made, after the Indian style, of a section of log hollowed by use of a fire of coals placed on the top and kept alive with a bellows.

The friendly Oneida Indians once offered to borrow Mr. White's granddaughter for an all-night visit, to the overwhelming fear of her mother, who could scarcely be prevailed upon to let her go. The grandfather's wiser counsels won, and the next morning, late, the little girl, showered with

attentions, bedecked in Indian garb and bound in a frame like a papoose, was returned to her anxious relatives. This was the beginning of a strong friendship between the Whites and their Indian neighbors.

For years afterward, there was still occasionally to be seen an Indian family on its way to the fishing grounds, the brave erect, stalwart, and dignified; his squaw bearing the burdens, and all walking in single file. At dark, the same family returned, drunken and unhappy, straggling wretchedly back through the woods to their home.

The early settlers of Whitestown had a little song, which must have been very attractive to contemplating buyers from New England.

#### WHITESTOWN ROVE

Come all ye laboring hands  
That toil below  
Among the rocks and sands  
To plough and sow,  
Come and quit your hired lands  
Let out by cruel hands  
You 'll make large amends—  
If you 'll to Whitestown go.

There 's many a pleasant plain  
Lies on that vale,  
Where you can settle down,  
You need not fail—  
You 'll make a large estate,  
So don't come too late.



The pigeon, goose and duck  
To fill our beds;  
The beaver, coon and fox  
To crown our heads.  
Oh! the harmless moose and deer  
Make food and clothes to wear;  
Nature could do no more for any land.

There stand the lofty pines—  
They make a show!  
As straight as any lines  
Their bodies grow,  
And their lofty limbs do rear  
Up to the atmosphere  
Where winged tribes repair;  
(And most sweetly sing).

Our cows they give us milk,  
By nature fed;  
Our fields afford us wheat  
And corn for bread.  
Oh! the sugar trees do stand,  
And sweeten all the land  
We have them at our hand—  
(So do not fear).

When Mr. White made his journey up the Mohawk River in 1784, by bateau, he had with him four sons, one daughter, and a daughter-in-law. As the boat proceeded slowly up the noble stream, one of his sons, with two yoke of oxen, kept pace with him on land. At a vacant spot near the present Mohawk village, they stopped to plant corn, returning in the fall to harvest it.

While at this point they were undoubtedly passed by James Deane, Andrew Blanchard, and Jedediah Phelps, on their way to found a settlement on Wood Creek. Finding the spot then selected an undesirable one and subject to inundation it was given up. This land had been granted to Mr. Deane by the Oneida Indians, subject to confirmation by the State, but they now agreed to the selection of another locality, which was made in 1785.

In 1786 a patent in the present town of Westmoreland was granted to James Deane, who, with his brother and family, had already located upon the land therein described, in the preceding February. In the fall Mr. Deane returned to Connecticut and was married, bringing his bride back with him on horseback.

Mr. James Deane was a well educated man who had been fitted to become a missionary among the Indians, and early been sent to live with a branch of the Oneida tribe then living at Oquago on the Susquehanna. An Oneida woman, taking a liking to the lad, adopted him as her son.

During the Revolution, Mr. Deane was stationed at Oneida Castle and Fort Stanwix, where he did good service as Indian interpreter. As before stated, he finally located in Oneida County. On one occasion a party of Oneidas, on their return from a fishing trip to Cohoes, had partaken too freely of firewater and invaded the rights of the village blacksmith somewhere on the banks

of the Mohawk. In attempting to eject his unwelcome guests, the unwilling host used the hammer too freely, unintentionally killing one of them. The body was taken home, a council was held. According to ancient law, the first person of a tribe with whom they were at peace who might pass through their domains, after such a murder by a member of his tribe, must suffer death. Judge Deane belonged to the white man's tribe; it so happened Judge Deane was the first man who passed over their grounds after the council.

The judge had been informed of what awaited him, but he stood his ground. One night, when the terrible war-whoop sounded near his home, he met the Indian messenger of death and pleaded eloquently for his life. It was of no avail. The tomahawk was uplifted to strike, when two Indian women rushed in and added their pleadings to his. At length, baring their bosoms, they stood between him and the avenger, declaring that his blood should not run alone. It was Mr. Deane's adopted mother, who, with a friend, had come to his rescue, and her intercessions at last prevailed.

In the summer of 1784, the same year that Judge White had located at his new home, the sturdy Germans who had been routed from that clearing in 1776 were again on the ground, planting and reaping, and were soon joined by some of their German neighbors. Settlements along the upper Mohawk multiplied rapidly.

Floorless, doorless, windowless huts framed with poles, thatched with bark—such were the earliest habitations of the thrifty New Englanders—or, possibly, blankets served for side-walls, strips of rawhide for rough doors, and squares of oiled paper for window-panes. To build a log cabin was a step in advance.

In the cattle enclosures, fires were often built at night to keep off the bears and wolves. Bear stories are plentiful concerning the early settlers of the present Oneida County.

Think of Oneida's maid, ye graceful girls to-day,  
Who cleared the dooryard of a bear at bay,  
And swept him out with just an oaken broom!  
Salute, ye heroes, give the maiden room!

The flesh of the bear, by the way, was sometimes quite an addition to the supply of meat. Unfortunately Bruin himself was a great marauder, stealing many a young porker and many an ear of tender corn. Much hardship had to be suffered that the farmer's work need not be interrupted while he was engaged in planting and harvesting. Sometimes the eyes of potatoes were reserved for planting, and sometimes the golden coffee was forsworn and the careful families were content with roasted pease.

In 1787 a little settlement had been begun at the present village of Clinton. The first woman to arrive was a Mrs. Solomon Hovey. To provide an extra luxury for this lady, her husband cut down



a huge, hollow basswood tree, selected a large section, sawed off one side, and set it on end beside their dwelling-place. There, provided with several ample shelves, it proved a very convenient cupboard.

Settlers at this point came in so rapidly that it was not possible at once to clear sufficient land and plant suitable crops. Want resulted, and in 1789, the people, distressed for food, appealed for aid to the storekeeper, Isaac Paris, of the village of Fort Plain. Their appeal was not in vain.

This was his reply:

No matter about the pay. Your women and children must not be permitted to starve. Take what you need to feed them, and if, at any time in the future, you are able to pay for it, it will be well, but your families *must not* be allowed to starve.

Up the Mohawk promptly came a flat-bottomed boat laden with flour and meal. It was but a loan that was needed. For months the women and children scoured the woods for ginseng—a root of much commercial value at the time. In such coin was the benefactor repaid. When, in 1792, a new town was formed from Whitestown, including Clinton village, it was given the name of Paris.

In the year 1880 the remains of the generous Paris, with the consent of his descendants, were removed from the crumbling ancient burial ground

at Fort Plain and reinterred, with appropriate ceremonies, in the town of Paris. There, in the custody of the county of Oneida, they lie at rest.

The first settlement at Fort Stanwix was made in 1785 by Willett Ranney, with his eleven children.

At the home of Seth Ranney, one of these children, very many loaves of bread were baked at the time of the treaty there, in 1788. The large oven was kept running day and night, consuming many barrels of flour. A quantity of liquor which had been stored in the barn was thrown away, lest the Indians might find it and become violently intoxicated.

The Welsh people formed quite a large and very interesting contingent in the early settlement of what is now Oneida County—some coming thither from an earlier established community in Pennsylvania and some directly from the Old World.

In March, 1795, twelve Welsh families started from their home in Wales to form such a settlement. Taking sloop from New York to Albany, by land thence to Schenectady, they proceeded by bateau to Utica, then known as Old Fort Schuyler, a hamlet of a dozen log cabins and one frame house. Thence, at the rate of five or six miles a day, they proceeded, with oxen and one horse to lead, resting one night under a large tree from a pouring rain. Marked trees on the road to the nearest grist-mill, twenty miles away, at

Whitestown, were most imperfect guides, but the trusty horse led them safely to Steuben.

On reaching their destination they sought the shelter of friendly elms under which to build the first rude homes. Their primitive furniture was then constructed—sofas of split logs, flat side up, with pegs for legs, bedsteads of four posts with sticks laid across, the table often the trunk of a large sawed-off tree.

Gerrit Boon, a native of Holland and an agent of the Holland Land Company, arrived at the site of Trenton village in 1793, giving it the name of Oldenbarneveld, in honor of that patriotic Hollander. Col. Adam G. Mappa and Doctor Vander Kamp, whose names betray their nationality, soon located there also, and the New England pioneers were not slow to follow. The newcomers and their household goods were generally drawn in by oxen. As soon as they arrived, the neighbors would turn out and very shortly a new house would be up, with the family in possession. Trading was done in Utica. During the winter, poor roads made travelling difficult, but a floundering carrier on horseback would occasionally bring in the mails. There were times in Oldenbarneveld when saucers of lard with strips of linen for wicks were forced into duty in lieu of candles.

In 1798, there were six log houses and one frame house in what is now the city of Rome.

The first merchant of Utica is said to have been Peter Smith, a native of Rockland County, who

established a store at Fall Hill, Herkimer County, and shortly after removed to "Old Fort Schuyler." Of about the same date was one John Cunningham, who adopted Indian dress and often spent months among the natives. He sold out to John Post previous to 1793.

Mr. Post, who was of Dutch extraction, came to Utica in 1790 from Schenectady, bringing his family and household goods with him in a bateau. His dwelling served as a store for the first year, at the close of which he erected a building adjoining it for the purpose of trade. He dealt largely with the Indians, exporting to China large quantities of the valuable ginseng root. Traders who stopped at Utica in 1793 found Mr. Post in control of all the pork that was to be obtained, while a Mr. Kip possessed all the salt. As Mr. Post asked, in their opinion, too much for his pork, they purchased all of Mr. Kip's salt, upon which they were better able to drive a bargain with Mr. Post.

Mr. Post afterward established a warehouse on the riverside and carried on a large trade with Schenectady, quantities of goods being transported between the two points by means of boats. The firm was known to advertise cotton yarn by the pound and candles by the ton.

At this period boats were loaded with furs from the great four-horse wagons at the foot of Genesee Street, discharging their cargoes to the same wagons, which were to carry them to the "Great West."



In the *Western Sentinel*, September 27, 1795, Richard Smith offered for sale:

lime juice, Muscovado and East India sugar, molasses, soap, tobacco, Spanish and American segars, ciphalique and rape, snuff, hairpowder and pomatum, curling irons, combs, etc., etc.

And, at about the same time, Boardman & Dewey quaintly advertise

Cloths, Cassimeres, Yorkshire Plaids, Thicksets, Shalloons, Durants, Plain Black Calmanco, Striped Do. Black Russell, Taboretts, Bandanna Hdkfs, Black Mode, Wildbone, Rattinetts, Mens and Womens Buckles.

Brass Nubs, Razors, Iron Dogs, Franklin Stoves, Hard Soap, Drawn Boot Legs, W. I. Rum, Rubstones, Bibles, Spelling Books.

Will receive in payment Wheat, Rye or Barley and [naively add] Money will not be refused.

William G. Tracy was one of Utica's earliest merchants. He kept an excellent store. Calico was then sold at six shillings and sixpence a yard, although, on one occasion, Mr. Tracy deducted the sixpence and sold a second piece of goods for six shillings per yard on account of the first having been burned at the house of the dressmaker.

Bryan Johnson arrived at Utica July 4, 1793, and began to buy produce, money down, something not done by preceding merchants. He also sold good goods at unusually low prices. These

proceedings diverted trade from the Kane Brothers at Canajoharie, and they presently removed to Utica and, under the firm name of Kane & Van Rensselaer, set up competition with Mr. Johnson. Trade at Utica thus received a strong impetus.

"Rock Salts on Sale at Kane & Van Rensselaer's" were advertised in *Cato's Patrol* as late as 1801.

The first town meeting in the town of Whites-town was held Tuesday, the 7th day of April, 1789, "agreeable to warning," and "it being more convenient" it then adjourned to the barn of Hugh White, Esq. One of the important measures passed at this meeting was to the effect that swine be allowed to run at large, if "yoaked and ringed." Whitestown was still a part of Montgomery County.

The reader will, perhaps, be interested to know the particulars concerning an early election which was held, by the way, in Capt. Needham Maynard's barn, April 6, 1790, this being Whites-town's second town meeting.

Montgomery County, ss.—This certifies that the freeholders and other inhabitants of Whitestown, being met in said town for the purpose of choosing Town Officers on Tuesday, the 6th day of April, 1790, did on said day collect fifty votes for Maj. William Colbraith, and thirty-four votes for Col. Jedediah Sanger, for Supervisor, and William Colbraith was declared to be Supervisor. Then proceeded to the election of other officers, but many people being

deprived of the privilege of voting for Supervisor etc, moved to have the proceedings of the day made null and void, which passed in the affirmative. The meeting being then adjourned to Wednesday, the 7th inst, at 10 o'clock in the morning, at this place. Wednesday, 10 o'clock in the morning, met according to adjournment, and the poll list being opened and kept open till about five o'clock in the afternoon, at which time the poll list was closed, and upon canvassing the same, found that Jedediah Sanger was unanimously elected Supervisor, with the number of 119 votes, which choice was publicly declared in said meeting, and that he hath produced a certificate from Hugh White, Esq., that he has taken the oath of office.

Attest for Elijah Blodget, *Town Clerk*.

Attest for Ashbel Beach, *Town Clerk*.

In 1791, Herkimer County was set off from Montgomery. Whitestown now being a part of Herkimer County, it was provided by law that court should be held alternately at Herkimer and Whitestown. New Hartford, being in Whitestown, once, and once only, obtained the privilege of holding court. This was held in the new "Meeting House" on the third Tuesday in January, 1794.

It was a cold day and the learned judges and counsellors felt the chill. The lawyers contrived to obtain a little brown decanter full of spirits and helped themselves sparingly. Upon this fact becoming patent to the judges there was some little commotion on the bench. A short consultation was held, and then it was declared unnecessary

to hold court longer at risk of freezing, and the crier was requested to announce adjournment. Thereupon one of the lawyers hastily snatched up the jug and extending it exclaimed, "Oh no, Judge, don't adjourn yet; take a little gin; that will keep you warm." The court remained in session.

The sheriff of those days wore a cocked hat and sable robes, and judges, jurors, and counsel marched to the court-house in procession. Pillory, stocks, and whipping-posts stood in the old court-yard at Whitestown, whipping posts being abolished March 26, 1796.

#### SANGERFIELD SCHOOL BILL:

A return of schooling kept in Sangerfield, in the county of Herkimer, which began the 28th of December, 1795, and continued till March the 19th A.D. 1796. Wages 6 dollars and two-thirds per month.

DANIEL A. BRAINARD, *Instructor.*

The "First Religious Society in Whitestown" was formed August 27, 1791, at New Hartford, that beautiful village then being without a name. It was organized by the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards at the same time as were the two congregations of Paris and Clinton.

Colonel Sanger, New Hartford's first settler, gave, June 22, 1792, a lease of the land for the site of the church, the description of the land conveyance beginning at "a point four rods west of Col. Sanger's barn." The land was let "for all



time at a yearly rent of 'one wheat corn.' ” The first pastor was Rev. Daniel Bradley, ordained February, 1792.

The second pastor, Rev. Joshua Johnson, was ordained and installed October 26, 1795. At the time of this gentleman's examination preparatory to ordination, the council reported that he had not been found sufficiently orthodox to be ordained. He was unable to assent to the doctrine

that before saving grace could be applied to the conversion of the soul, it must feel an entire willingness to be damned.

A new council was then called, of somewhat more tolerant views, and Mr. Johnson was duly ordained and installed. This society erected, in 1793, the first church building in Oneida County, and a steeple was added in 1796. Both church and steeple are still standing.

The Paris Hill Church, at the time of its organization, numbered five members. At the installation of the first pastor, Rev. Eliphalet Steele, A.M., July 15, 1795, it had nineteen communicants.

Unfold the wardrobe in the cedar chest,  
The weary work is done. The Sabbath rest  
Begins to-night and lasts all day to-morrow,  
Grant perfect peace without a dream of sorrow.

But the present county of Oneida was not the only one along the river to come into possession of Connecticut pioneers.

Abraham Jacobse Lansing, of old Stone Arabia, had a part of his property laid out in building lots in 1771. These lots sold rapidly, after the Revolution, to intending settlers from New England. Thus began the present Lansingburg, which, in turn, became known as "New City" in contradistinction to Albany, the "Old City."

One parcel of land of 136½ acres leased, December 16, 1794, for fifteen bushels of wheat, four hens, and one day's services; another April 15, 1793, for rent yearly of twenty-seven bushels of wheat, four fat fowls, and a day's service with carriage and horses; still another, three bushels and three pecks of wheat, four fat fowls, one day's service with carriage and horses.

Settlers here had but to cast their eyes across the Hudson River to spy out the three handsome farms of the Vander Heydens. Capt. Stephen Ashley early rented the homestead of Mattys Vander Heyden and opened a tavern known as the "Farmer's Inn."

An enterprising New Englander of this period (Mr. Benjamin Covell) set up a store in 1786 in a hired building, remarking naïvely in a letter to his brother, November 16, 1786:

This country is the best for business I ever saw. I will go into my store the 18th November—hired it for six months for £12 lawful money. Done more business in one day than in one week in Providence. The night of the 15th, after sun-down, took in 20 dollars. Got my goods first from Albany, but in the spring

will go to New York. I am one mile from Benj. Thurber's down the river. They are all well. I board at Stephen Ashleys, the man I hire of. He seems to be a clever man and keeps a large tavern which is a great advantage to me.

Somewhat less than a year afterward, he bought a store. A later letter to his brother reads:

I send by Captain Benj. Allen twelve pounds and ten ounces of beaver and sixteen raccoon skins for which I want you to send me some writing paper. Send me as many sheepskins as you are a mind to. Two of them will make a man a pair of breeches. I want spelling-books and paper. I will advertise in the New City paper. Don't sell your paper to anybody that belongs in New City.

In 1786, Benjamin Thurber, of Rhode Island, leased from Jacob I. Vander Heyden some land "on the west side of River Street" and built a wooden dwelling-house, in which he also kept store.

In the *Northern Sentinel and Lansingburgh Advertiser*, June 4, 1787, we find that:

Benj Thurber Hereby acquaints the Public that he continues to sort his New Cash Store at the Sign of the Bunch of Grapes, at the Fork of the Hoosack Road, near Mr. Jacob Vander Heyden's, with East, West India and European goods of all kinds. For which he will receive in lieu of Cash Black Salts, Shipping Furs, Wheat, Corn, Rye, Butter, Cheese, Flax

and Flax Seed, Tallow, Hogs' Lard, Gammons, Pork, Bees' Wax and old Pewter. He also continues to receive ashes, as usual, to supply his new-erected Pot and Pearl Ash factory, and will pearl black salts in the best manner on equitable Terms, and also will give the highest Price for black salts.

N.B. A number of New French Muskets for sale at the above Store.

Jacob Dirckse Vander Heyden was finally persuaded to lay out sixty-five acres of his farm in building lots which are now covered by closely gathered houses and places of trade. Vanderheyden became Troy by vote of its citizens January 5, 1789. Jacob D. Vander Heyden revenged himself thereafter by writing it Vanderheyden, *alias* Troy.

Troy was prosperous, for the reason, perhaps, that the inhabitants began public worship as soon as one man arrived who could make a prayer. The services began in Ashley's ballroom and continued in the schoolhouse. The conch-shell, more steadily blown than ordinarily, as the signal for public worship, was otherwise used for the ferry-boat traffic.

The citizens of Troy organized a Presbyterian congregation in 1791. The collections being scanty, owing to lack of small coin, the trustees of the congregation of Troy began issuing to members, in 1792, notes of the value of twopence. A house of worship was begun in 1792, but not completed for a long time, after which it boasted a



high pulpit with winding stairs, a clerk, box-pews, and foot-stoves.

On August 30, 1793, the *United* Presbyterian Congregation of Troy and Lansingburg extended a call to the Rev. Jonas Coe. The respected pastor, in wintry weather, often preached in cloak and gloves.

Gone is the preacher with the braided queue,  
The velvet small-clothes and the buckled shoe,  
The broad-flapped coat, the continental hat,  
The broad bandanna and the broad cravat.

## CHAPTER XI

### TURNPIKE AND TAVERN

IT was about the year 1788 that a strong impulse for colonization set in among New Englanders, their objective point being the western valley of the Mohawk, and, later, the valley of the Genesee. Mounted on sturdy steeds and well supplied with saddle-bags and portmanteaux they came spying out the fair land which they were to enter. Forty or fifty tourists at one time were frequently quartered at Little Falls. Already some of the Indian trails had given place to wagon roads. About 1790, thoroughfares began to be more generally laid out, their precise trend usually determined in the village records by such landmarks as birch trees and hemlocks, fences, creeks, and pasture lands, with a neighborly use of the owners' names freely interspersed. During the winter of 1795, twelve hundred sleighs loaded with Genesee Valley emigrants passed through Albany. Land was then to be procured for from ten cents to one dollar an acre. Roads were still poor and bridgeless, beyond Schenectady, until 1796 when a toll-bridge was built over the river at Fort Hunter.

On its completion a line of stages was established westward from Albany.

At Cohoes another bridge was built over the Mohawk in 1795. Thirteen stone piers gave support to this structure, which was nine hundred feet in length and twenty-four yards wide. The gate house was tended for many years by the village blacksmith.

A fast settling population was working out the law of demand and supply. The first mail was received at Schenectady on the 3d day of April, 1783, the stage-coach from Albany having consumed three weeks in the round trip. During the Revolution, Lambert Clement is on record as carrying the mail on horseback from Cherry Valley to Johnstown. On one occasion his mount was shot through the neck, though not disabled.

In 1790 the first stage carrying mail ran from Albany to Schenectady, Johnstown, and Canajoharie once a week. The fare was three cents a mile. In 1792 the route was extended to take in, once in two weeks, Fort Plain, Old Fort Schuyler (now Utica), and Whitestown.

When the extension was proposed, the *Whitestown Gazette* observed:

Such an idea a few years ago would have been ridiculed, but from the great intercourse with the world through this city, we have every reason to suppose it will answer a valuable purpose, both to the public and the proprietors, especially if the proprietors

should succeed in contracting for the mails, of which there can be little doubt.

In 1793, one Simeon Pool was wont to transport the mail from Canajoharie to Whitestown at the expense of the inhabitants, being allowed twenty-eight hours to make the round trip of twenty miles. This he did on horseback, his wife taking his place when other duties claimed his time. The same year the first regular stage was run by Moses Beal once a week over the route of Albany, Schenectady, Johnstown, and Canajoharie.

It is recorded that in 1793 the "Great Western mail" arrived at Utica with six letters for the inhabitants of "Old Fort Schuyler," a fact that soon became known from one end of the settlement to the other. Then a faithful dog whose name was Tray was called into requisition. With the letters strapped to his back and his master's slave whistling beside him he performed the duties of his office and returned in regulation time!

In 1794, a post-road was established from Albany through Mohawk to Canandaigua. Trips were made once in two weeks, the fare from Schenectady to Canajoharie about this time being fourteen shillings to go and twelve to return. The pack-horse had given place to mammoth wagons and these, in turn, to some extent, to the four- or eight-horse rumbling stage. It was needful that the driver should be an honest man, for to him were entrusted many loving missives and precious



parcels. It is said that every post-road and turnpike was a mail route. Often the mail was left at a hotel and passed from teamster to teamster until it found its destined resting-place.

In 1794, April 11, Ananias Platt, grateful for public custom, undertook to run the stage twice a day from Lansingburg to Albany and back. In 1795, the proprietors of the Western Mail stage advertised that they had provided good and commodious stage sleighs which would accommodate ten passengers, and had reduced their fares during good sleighing to twopence halfpenny per mile. The same year John Hudson ran two stages, one of four horses, the other of two, daily between Albany and Schenectady. Ananias Platt soon followed along this route, making four trips a day.

The conduct of the mail-stage from Canajoharie to Whitestown, formerly assigned to Mr. Pool, passed afterward into the hands of Jason Parker, who was wont to be tastefully attired for his trips in a beaver hat with a broad brim, and a spencer which he wore outside his coat and who, when not actually driving, always carried a long-stemmed pipe.

The *Western Sentinel*, September 23, 1795, contains one of Mr. Parker's advertisements:

The mail leaves Whitestown every Monday and Thursday at 2 o'clock, P.M., and proceeds to Old Fort Schuyler the same evening—next morning starts at 4 o'clock and arrives at Canajoharie in the evening; exchanges passengers with the Albany and Coopers-

town stages and the next day returns to Old Fort Schuyler. Fare for passengers \$2.00, way passengers four cents per mile, fourteen pounds of baggage gratis, 150 weight rated the same as a passenger. Seats may be had by applying at the post-office, Whitestown, or at the home of the Subscriber, old Ft. Schuyler, or at Captain Roof's, Canajoharie.

August, 1795,

JASON PARKER. }

In 1796, a Lansingburg paper of August 18th says:

A few years ago, there was but one stage between this town and Albany. This was established and maintained at great expense by Mr. A. Platt and for a considerable time had little encouragement. He, however, persevered and, at this day, this mode of travelling has so increased that twenty stages pass and repass daily between the neighboring towns of Lansingburgh, Troy, Watervliet, and Albany, averaging more than 150 passengers per day, a proof of our growth and prosperity.

#### ALBANY AND SCHENECTADY

##### MORNING STAGE

The Public are respectfully informed that *Goodman's* Albany and Schenectady morning Stage will start from his House in Schenectady on the mornings of Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7 o'clock, arrive in Albany at eleven, call at Platt's, Lewis's, Crane's, Trowbridge's, Wendell's and Skinner's on the Dock, for passengers, and return on the evenings of the

same days. Careful and civil drivers, due attention to every command, and the least favor gratefully acknowledged by the Publick's humble servant,

SIMEON GOODMAN.

Schenectady, October 15, 1799.

From *The Albany Centinel*,

Friday, December 27, 1799.

### Twice a Week

The Mail Stage will start from Utica every Tuesday and Friday morning, and arrive at Schenectady in two days. Those Ladies and Gentlemen who will favor the Subscribers with their custom will find good horses, easy carriages, and the best and most experienced drivers. Particular attention will be paid by both the proprietors and drivers.

The publick's most humble servants,

MOSES BEAL and JASON PARKER.

UTICA, Nov. 11, 1799.

### THE WESTERN

#### MAIL STAGE

Commenced running three times a week on Monday the 18th inst. To start from Dunn's Stage-house, Albany, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 5 o'clock A.M. leaves Schenectady the same day at 9 o'clock. Persons wishing to travel on the above stage will please to apply the day previous to the starting to engage their seats.

MOSES BEAL.

SCHENECTADY, May 30, 1807.

N.B.—The Fare from Albany to Utica five dollars and fifty cents.

For Seats on the Schenectady daily Stage, apply as above.

### SCHENECTADY & ALBANY

#### STAGES

The subscriber has this day commenced running an AFTERNOON STAGE to Albany. The stage leaves the Schenectady Coffee-House every afternoon, at 6 o'clock, Sunday excepted. A good Carriage, able Horses and a careful driver is procured.

For seats, apply at the Schenectady Coffee-House, corner of Union and Ferry Street, and at John B. Clute's, Washington Street, and Gideon Dubois' Inn, corner of Washington and Front Streets.

N.B. The Morning stage runs as usual.

JAMES ROGERS.

SCHENECTADY, April 25, 1808.

In 1810, Joshua Ostrom and others started a line of stages leaving Albany, Monday and Friday, and Utica, Monday and Thursday. The runs a little later became more frequent and the route came into sharp competition with that of Mr. Parker. Parker and Powell, in 1811, advertised:

The mail stages now leave Baggs, Utica, every morning at 4 o'clock. Passengers will breakfast at Maynard's, Herkimer, dine at Josiah Shepherd's, Palatine, and sup (on oysters) at Thomas Powell's Tontine Coffee House, Schenectady. The ladies and gentlemen who will favor this line with their patronage may be assured of having good horses, attentive



drivers, warm carriages, and that there shall not be any running or racing of horses on the line.

Mr. Parker's rivals, having no mails to carry, announced their willingness to "go through in one day unless the extreme badness of the traveling rendered it utterly impossible." Passengers were to "have the liberty of breakfasting dining & supping where when and on what they please. No more than eight persons, unless by unanimous consent."

A driver named Parsons, in the early 1800's, was accustomed to make the trip all the way from Connecticut to Whitestown and very popular was his stage with the villagers. Seats were engaged for months ahead. His horn was a welcome sound, for there was little other opportunity to hear from the old home. The trip to Hartford was two weeks in length. At the time of starting he would drive from one little settlement to another to take on the passengers.

In 1823, Thomas Powell commenced running daily stages from Schenectady to Troy, fare seven cents each way. From a Schenectady newspaper of May 1, 1823, we find, at the close of the advertisement announcing the new enterprise, the following quaint notice:

N.B. As this is an establishment entirely new, it is not likely to be very profitable at first; but the proprietor hopes in time, with the assistance of his friends, to make it a great accommodation to the

public and merely asks a remuneration for necessary expenses.

In 1825, another daily line was started between Schenectady and Troy and the fare reduced to six and one-half cents.

What more picturesque sight can imagination conjure up than that of the old stage-coach thundering up from Albany or the West? The creaking of the wheels, the stamp of the horses' hoofs, the blast of the driver's horn and the harmless crack of the long whip that his four or eight horses might make a creditable dash into public view!

Jolly jehus the drivers were, too, as well able to crack a joke as a whip. The motley, picturesque load that presently emerged,—the little gossiping crowd that idly scanned the passengers or eagerly waited for loving missives and the latest news!

Perhaps the scene is laid in winter and amid drifting snows, instead of the expected stage a solitary horseman picks his floundering way to the door of the inn. That means that the stage is caught in the storm, and fresh horses and willing men must attempt its relief, to bring the jaded steeds and the load of dampened passengers to the hospitable roof.

The country inn! Did it ever look more inviting than now with its blazing fire-place—no less alluring in summer, with its broad poplar-shaded veranda. Inviting were the good vrouw's

sausages and sauerkraut, her ham and eggs, fresh brook trout, maple sugar, and Dutch cheese, and the thousand other old-fashioned dishes our grandmothers knew so well how to make. Sweet was rest at last in the comfortable beds which were the pride of the thrifty heart.

When the energetic New Englanders once made up their minds to emigrate, they so swelled the tide of travel that the Mohawk Valley people were compelled to open their doors and put out signs whether they would or not. "Road-houses" were scarcely a mile apart. Along the Mohawk turnpike, the good vrouws vied with each other in the reputation for excellent cookery and well-made beds,—indeed, the home of nearly every well-to-do citizen along the route was perforce a country inn.

The form of license ran:

Have examined and find the hereinafter named persons of good moral character and of sufficient ability to keep inns or taverns and that inns or taverns are absolutely necessary at the several places where they now reside for the accommodation of travellers.

The Black Horse, Black Bear, White Horse, Red Lion, White Bear,—such were some of the most common signs.

Sugar is sweet,  
And so is honey,  
Here 's the place  
To spend your money.

This inscription must have been taking, indeed. The reverse side bears the landlord's name and a pictured beehive. Both sides were commonly painted.

The famous "I am going to law" sign belonged to the Upham tavern at Herkimer. A gayly attired and mounted gentleman's picture was labelled with the above words. The reverse portrayed a dilapidated individual on a sorry-looking nag, and beneath was printed "I have been to law." A sad-looking traveller on foot adorned another sign. The reverse was a pictured frolic, very gay indeed, of dancing and "fiddle" playing. An Indian chief decorated the sign of William Smith. A Utica hotel was appropriately named, considering the style of cognomen assigned the settlements of the vicinity. It was called the "Cincinnatus," and the sign was ornamented with the classic countenance of that Roman patriot.

It became evident, somewhere about the year 1787, that a "house of rest" was needed somewhere between the "Old City" (Albany) and the "New City" (Lansingburg). Accordingly, the enterprising Col. Stephen Ashley, of Salisbury, Connecticut, took the matter in hand and secured the lease of the old brick dwelling of Mattys Vander Heyden, erected in 1752.

Mr. Ashley's sign was unique. A small gate suspended across the road attracted the attention of the traveller. It was attached to a strip of



board, supported by two tall posts. On the board was the inscription:

"This gate hangs low, it hinders none; refresh, then pay and travel on."

Another post stood in front of the house. It was surmounted by an open three-sided box. Each side was labelled:

"Come, here is Ashley's. Let us call."

There were nine taverns among the sixty houses at Johnstown in 1806.

Still standing in Johnstown is the old *Black Horse*, with its many little closets, small windows, porch in front, and the double Dutch ovens, visible from the outside.

Vaumane Jean Baptiste De Fonclaiere kept a public house, still standing, in Johnstown. This house was quite a rendezvous for fur-traders from the north. In 1796 he built another tavern at the intersection of the roads to Tribes Hill and Fonda's Bush.

In the early part of the nineteenth century there were thirteen houses between "Fink's" and East Creek, a distance of five miles—and twelve of them were taverns. Fink's fine tavern, still standing, was built in 1805. Horses were always changed at Herkimer, the driver blowing his horn to give warning of his approach. Fresh steeds would be in readiness.

John Roof entertained, at his inn at Roofstown, now Canajoharie, some distinguished guests, among them Clinton and Washington. This

building was of stone, one and one half stories high, with a gable end, and had been erected some years previously by a Mr. Schremling. It was famous for its supply of sauerkraut, Dutch cheese, bread, and maple sugar.

A wooden house, known as the "Stage House," adorned with a pictured coach and four, was afterward built in front of the stone structure. It was kept, in 1826, by one Reuben Peake, later by Elisha Kane Roof. The present Hotel Wagner now occupies the site.

The oldest building in the village of Mohawk was built by Judge Gates in 1778. In 1804, it came into the possession of Rudolph Devendorf and, in 1817, it was sold to his brother, David Diefendorf, and opened as a Dutch tavern.

Mr. Wagner came to Fort Plain in 1805 and put up a small inn which was afterward converted into a dwelling. At East Canada Creek there was a stage house, kept by Mr. Couch, always to be relied on for excellent ham and eggs and fresh brook trout.

Mr. John Post came from Schenectady to Utica in the spring of 1790. His house became a dwelling, store, and inn and, until 1794, divided the honors with that of Colonel Bellinger, the two being the only places in the vicinity prepared for the entertainment of travellers.

In 1798, Mr. Timothy Dwight remarks:

A company of gentlemen from Holland, who have purchased large tracts of land in this state and



An Old Toll-Gate

Photograph by Lynn Reury





Pennsylvania and who are known by the name of the Holland Land Company have built here a large brick house to serve as an inn.

"The Hotel" was the only name by which the edifice was known until 1814, when its proprietor named it the York House. The first landlord was Mr. Schwartz, and he announced at its opening, December 2, 1799, that "the hotel in the village of Utica is open for the reception of such ladies and gentlemen as choose to honor the proprietor with their patronage."

A ball, followed by several entertainments, was given in celebration of the new enterprise. The invitations read:

#### WHITESTOWN DANCING ASSEMBLY

THE HONOR OF.....S COMPANY  
IS REQUESTED AT THE HOTEL ASSEMBLY  
ROOMS, IN UTICA, FOR THE SEASON.

|           |             |             |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| B. WALKER | W. G. TRACY | } MANAGERS. |
| J. S. KIP | C. PLATT    |             |
| A. BREESE | N. WILLIAMS |             |

Dec. 20, 1794.

Still the tide of travel swelled. First, it was Oneida, then Genesee, then, in later days, came the great immigrant wagons, canvas-covered, marked "Ohio," then "Indiana" and all took their course through the Mohawk Valley. Detached horsemen and riders were sent forward to secure accommodations for the night. Team-

sters were glad to sleep on the floor on outspread overcoats,—if only some shelter might be furnished for their horses.

During the earlier years of the nineteenth century, stages multiplied; eight to twelve, sometimes fourteen, entering or leaving Schenectady daily.

Toll-gates were an interesting feature of the landscape. Of them an English traveller says:

Toll gates do not swing on hinges as in England, but lift up by the portcullis, a custom used in countries referred to by that beautiful and sublime passage in Psalms: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors and the King of Glory shall come in."

There were toll-gates at Schenectady, Swartz's (Cranesville), Caughnawaga (Fonda), a little east of Schenck's Hollow, near Wagner's Hollow, near Garoga Creek, lower St. Johnsville, East Creek Bridge, Fink's Ferry, and West Canada Creek (Herkimer), Sterling and Old Fort Schuyler (Utica).

In those days the freighter sprang into being. He conveyed freight from Albany to Buffalo at five dollars per hundred weight, from Albany to Utica at eleven dollars for one hundred pounds. He carried his own mattress upon which to sleep, to be rolled up in the morning and stowed away in the wagon.

Pennsylvania freighters were much in evidence,

—large, stout wagons, large, stout harness, and large, stout, finely developed horses, the rear ones decked with musical open bells.

A shilling was the usual price of a meal, likewise of lodging. The farmer carrying his produce to Albany brought his own lunch, home-cooked, and ate it from his wooden box. Some teamsters carried fodder for their horses and what they could not supply could be procured at reasonable rates. A horse provided by his master with oats but no hay was furnished with stable and hay for night and morning, and the charge was eighteen cents.

Hot coffee, beer, or stronger drink could be obtained at very small price to wash down the cold food. Whiskey was but twenty-five cents a gallon. The barroom was often heated by a large fireplace or, perhaps, two fireplaces, in which were stored great quantities of green-picked wood which consumed slowly and lasted long. A sheet-iron box, provided with a pipe and elevated on a brick base, was sometimes used for a stove. An iron box inserted in the stone wall between the barroom and kitchen—closed on barroom side, open for cooking purposes into the kitchen—was another heating method.

It was needful that inns should be safe, and they were intrusted to men of good repute and often of some importance in the community. They were generally the homes of the well-to-do, naturally best adapted to the needs of travellers.

On the walls were posted advertisements,—stages, entertainments, lost cattle or jewelry, good, fresh foods, in miscellaneous confusion. Accommodations varied much. Some taverns provided bunks for teamsters, ranged along the sides of the room; covered boxes were the traveller's own impromptu table; uncovered, his bed.

Says a traveller of the day: "At Inns, look for no bowing landlord or waiter." Indeed, the hosts were quite independent and allowed their swarming guests to water their own horses and look pretty well after themselves.

Said Mrs. Petrie, a daughter of Mr. Post:

As ours was the first house which could accommodate travellers, a sign was put up, though reluctantly, and my father kept tavern no longer than until some one with means, etc. could be prevailed on to leave a more privileged place to settle here, for the sole purpose of keeping a tavern. In those days, men in that business were very independent, and if travellers or "movers" wished to "put up" at a tavern, they had to help themselves, water their own horses or oxen, harness or yoke them again, and if they asked to be served with aught the landlord or his family would sometimes ask, "who was your waiter last year?"

In those days, when our great-grandfathers went to Congress or attended to no less laudable enterprises, our hardy great-grandmothers had a pleasant and thrifty habit of running the inns



during their absence, and sometimes had occasion to show their grit.

In the newer settlements, the Indians were often unwelcome guests, stretching themselves in front of the fire in winter and on grass plats in summer, or in the barn if not too drunk to find it.

Mrs. Post of Utica was subject to peculiar trials at the hands of the red men and met them bravely. Holding up her smiling infant to the terrible half-breed, Brant, engaged in angry dispute with a dusky chieftain, she melted that stern warrior's wrath to tender tears. At another time, she withstood the demands of a maudlin red crowd for more whiskey, although the leader was armed with a knife, until she was able, through the window, to hail the hired man. That individual, diplomatically promising whiskey, was permitted to enter. At the same moment the mistress of the house contrived, with an iron rod, to knock the knife from the red man's hand. Reinforced, she was now able to repel the invaders and to win their lasting respect.

Many distinguished travellers have made the tour of our valley and paid admiring tributes to its beauties or quaintly described its early customs. Of these we have selected three.

Thurlow Weed tells us that as late as April, 1829, he left Albany at eight o'clock in the evening and travelled diligently for "seven nights and six days" to reach Rochester.

<sup>1</sup> The road from Albany to Schenectady, with the exception of two or three miles, was in horrible condition and that west of Schenectady, until we reached "Tripes" or "Tribes Hill" still worse. For a few miles, in the vicinity of the Palatine Church, there was a gravelly road, over which the driver could raise a trot, but this was a luxury experienced in but few localities, and those "far between." Passengers walked, to save the coach, several miles each day, and each night. Although they did not literally carry rails on their shoulders to pry the coach out of ruts, they were frequently called upon to use rails for that purpose. Such snail-paced movements and such discomforts in travel would be regarded as unendurable now. And yet passengers were patient and some of them even cheerful under all these delays and annoyances. That, however, was an exceptional passage. It was only when we had "horrid bad" roads that stages, "drew their slow lengths along."

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Proceeding eastward, we came to the Oneida Castle, the residence of the Oneida tribe of Indians. These Indians, long surrounded by white inhabitants, had emerged from their savage habits and customs, and were enjoying the advantages of civilization. These advantages consisted in loafing about taverns and groceries and in drinking bad whiskey. This process of demoralization went on until the few who did not die prematurely were induced to emigrate to Wisconsin. After leaving the Castle, the passengers would talk of the devotion of Rev. Mr. Kirkland to the Oneida

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed* by courtesy of the Houghton Mifflin Company.

Indians, of the eloquence of Skenando, one of their head chiefs, and of a French officer, Colonel de Ferrier, who married an Indian wife at Oneida Castle and whose sons and daughters were well-educated ladies and gentlemen, and this topic would scarcely be exhausted when we were driven into the village of Vernon, where we always changed horses. In Vernon, itself, there was nothing especially remarkable. The hotel was kept by a Mr. Stuart, whose sons and grandsons were persons of more or less consideration in different parts of the State for many years afterward. From Vernon to Westmoreland was but a few miles. The hotel at Westmoreland was kept by Mrs. Cary, a widow lady with six or seven accomplished daughters, who, as far as propriety allowed, made the hotel pleasant for the guests. These young ladies, quite well-known by intelligent and gentlemanly stage passengers, were sometimes irreverently designated as "Mother Cary's chickens." In this, however, no disrespect was intended for, tho' chatty and agreeable, they were deservedly esteemed and all, "in the course of human events," were advantageously married.

From Westmoreland, we were driven rapidly through New Hartford, into Utica, seventy-two miles from Auburn. This was the end of our second day's journey. But, for the accommodation of those who preferred a night ride, a stage left Utica at 9 P. M. Those to whom time was important, took the night line. We, however, will remain over. Utica is now no "pent up" place.

From Herkimer to Little Falls, seven miles, there were no particular attractions; nor indeed was there much of interest at the Falls, a small village with a valuable waterpower, nearly unavailable on account



of its being owned by Mr. Edward Ellice, a non-resident Englishman—

whom Mr. Weed highly praises.

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From Little Falls we came, after an hour's ride, to a hill, by the bank of the river, which several years before, General Scott was descending in a stage, when the driver discovered, at a sharp turn near the bottom of the hill, a Pennsylvania wagon, winding its way up diagonally. The driver saw but one escape from a disastrous collision and that to most persons would have appeared even more dangerous than the collision. The driver, however, having no time for reflection, instantly guided his team over the precipice, and into the river, from which the horses, passengers, coach and driver were safely extricated. The passengers, following General Scott's example, made the driver a handsome present, as a reward for his courage and sagacity. We dine at the East Canada Creek, where the stage house, kept by Mr. Couch, was always to be relied on for excellent ham and eggs and fresh brook trout. Nothing of especial interest until we reach Spraker's, a well-known tavern that neither stages nor vehicles of any description were ever known to pass.

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At Canajoharie, a tall, handsome man, with graceful manners, is added to our list of passengers. This is the Hon. Alfred Conkling, who in 1820 was elected to Congress from this district and who has just been appointed Judge of the United States District



Court for the Northern District of New York by Mr. Adams. Judge Conkling is now (in 1870) the oldest surviving New York member of Congress.

In passing Conine's Hotel near the Nose the fate of a beautiful young lady who loved not wisely, but too well, with an exciting breach of promise, etc. would be related. Still further East, we stop at Failing's tavern for water. Though but an ordinary tavern in the summer season, all travelers cherish a pleasant remembrance of the winter fare, for leaving a cold stage with chilled limbs, if not frozen ears, you were sure to find at Failing's bar and dining-rooms, rousing fires and the remembrance of the light, lively "hot and hot" buckwheat cakes and the unimpeachable sausages would renew the appreciation, even if you had just risen from a hearty meal.

Going some miles further east, we come in sight of a building on the south side of the Mohawk River and near the brink, the peculiar architecture of which attracts attention. This was formerly Charles Kane's store, or rather the store of the brothers Kane, five of whom were distinguished merchants in the early years of the present century. They were all gentlemen of education, commanding in person, accomplished and refined in manners and associations.

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The next points of attraction were of much historical interest. Sir William and Guy Johnson built spacious and showy mansions a few miles west of the village of Amsterdam, long before the Revolution, in passing which interesting anecdotes relating to the English

baronet's connection with the Indians was remembered. A few miles west of Sir William Johnson's, old stagers would look for an addition to our number of passengers, in the person of Daniel Cady, a very eminent lawyer, who resided at Johnstown and for more than fifty years was continually passing to and from Albany. At Amsterdam, Marcus S. Reynolds, then a rising young lawyer of that village often took his seat in the stage and was a most companionable traveler. He subsequently removed to Albany where, for more than a quarter of a century, he held a high professional and social position.

[ And now, as the Valley of the Mohawk spreads out more broadly, and the eye wanders over fields teeming with the bountiful products of Mother Earth, we come in view of Schenectady, first seen by a graduate of Union who immediately becomes eloquent in his laudation of Dr. Nott, whose sermon at Albany against duelling occasioned by the death of General Hamilton, is claimed as the greatest effort of the age. Our graduate would then enumerate the distinguished men scattered over the Union who owed their success to Dr. Nott's peculiar mode of lectures and training. Then, as we approached the old bridge across the Mohawk, he would tell us how long it had withstood storm and tempest and how many dark secrets it would disclose if it could talk.

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From Schenectady to Albany, thro' dwarf pines and a barren soil, the turnpike road ornamented with poplar trees at uniform distances on either side was tame and, unless enlivened by conversation, dull. But it was an unusual circumstance to find a stage-

coach, with fair weather and good roads, between Rochester and Albany, that was not enlivened by conversation, for there were almost always two or three intellectual passengers. Myron Holly, for example, with a gifted and highly-cultivated mind had committed to memory, and would recite by the hour, gems from the British poets. Mr. Granger also had a good memory, and would often, during the evening, recite from Burns, Moore and others. Richard L. Smith, a lawyer from Auburn, with his wit and drolleries, would make hours and miles seem short. And there was an unfailing source of fun at every stopping place in the "gibes and jokes" of the stage-drivers, who, as a class, were as peculiar, quaint and racy as those representatives of the senior and junior Wellers in *Pickwick*, as Samuel described them,—a class of highly social individuals, who had been driven off the roads and compelled to earn a precarious living by tending pikes and switches, or marrying "vidders," and whose intellectual successors are engine-drivers and stokers.

The stage-drivers of that day lived merry but short lives. The exceptions were in favor of those who, after a few years' experience, married some respectable farmer's daughter on their route, and changed their occupation from stage-driving to farming.

Miss Martineau, in her autobiography, published in 1839, remarks:

I traversed the valley of the Mohawk twice,—the first time by the canal, the next by stage, which I much preferred, both on account of the views being better from the highroad, and from the discomfort of



the canal boats. I had also the opportunity of observing the courses of the canal and the new railroad throughout.

I was amused, the first time, at hearing some gentlemen plan how the bed of the shoaly Mohawk might be deepened, so as to admit the passage of steam-boats. It would be nearly as easy to dig a river at once for the purpose and pump it full; in other words, to make another canal, twice as wonderful as the present. The railroad is a better scheme by far. In winter the traffic is continued by sleighs on the canal ice; and a pretty sight it must be.

The aspect of the valley was really beautiful last June. It must have made the Mohawk Indians heartsore to part with it, in its former quiet state, but now there is more beauty, as well as more life. There are farms, in every stage of advancement, with all the stir of life about them; and the still graveyard belonging to each, showing its white palings and tombstones on the hillside near at hand. Sometimes, a small space in the orchard is railed in for this purpose. In a shallow reach of the river there was a line of cows wading through, to busy themselves in the luxuriant pasture of the islands in the midst of the Mohawk. In a deeper part, the chain ferry-boat slowly conveyed the passengers across. The soil of the valley is remarkably rich, and the trees and verdure unusually fine. The hanging oak-woods of the ridge were beautiful and the knolls, tilled or untilled; and the little waterfalls trickling or leaping down, to join the rushing river. Little knots of houses were clustered about the locks and bridges of the canal, and here and there a village, with its white church conspicuous, spread away into the middle of



the narrow valley. The green and white canal boats might be seen stealing along under the opposite ridge, or issuing from a clump of elms or bushes, or gliding along a graceful aqueduct with the diminished figures of the walking passengers seen moving along the bank. On the other hand, the railroad, skirting the base of the ridge and the shanties of the Irish laborers roofed with turf, and the smoke issuing from a barrel at one corner were so grouped as to look picturesque, however little comfortable. In some of the narrowest passes of the valley, the high-road, the railroad and canal and the river, are all brought close together, and look as if they were trying which could escape first into a larger space. The scene at Little Falls is magnificent, viewed from the road, in the light of a summer's morning.\* The carrying the canal and railroad through this pass was a grand idea,—and the solidity and beauty of the works are worthy of it.

John Melish, a traveller of 1811, describes his journey thus:

Nov. 11—As we approached towards Utica, I was quite surprised with the appearance of the country; the houses were so thick, that it was for a considerable way like a continued village. Many of the buildings were elegant with fine orchards attached to them and the plots of ground adjoining were fertile and elegantly cultivated; while the lands at a little distance formed a singular contrast. They were bare of trees to a considerable distance, but the stumps were profusely scattered over the surface, a sure indication that the country had not long been the habitation of man. This is indeed a new country, but society

has made rapid progress; the more so, of course that it is immediately contiguous to the old; and Utica, which we reached at 9 o'clock, may be termed the key to the western country.

November 13th. The day clear and pleasant. I set out at 10 o'clock, and crossing the Mohawk river by a good wooden bridge, I travelled by a turnpike road, five miles, to a toll-bar. The bottoms here are fertile, but the lands at a distance appear rough, and a good many pine-trees are to be seen on the brows of the hills. To the next toll-bar is eighteen miles, in which space the valley contracts, the hills become more lofty and more barren, but the valley, on the river, about a mile wide, is rich land abounding with handsome settlements. I observed two streams to emerge from the hills and fall into the river on the opposite side. Beyond the second toll-bar, the road leads over a lofty bank, near the side of the river, over which I travelled a mile and a half, and then descended to the village of Herkimer, where I stopped all night.

Herkimer is romantically situated in a pretty valley, and consists of fifty-two houses, containing about 360 inhabitants.

It has a church, a court house, four taverns, and five stores; and issues a weekly newspaper.

Herkimer county is well settled. The river hills are barren but the interior of the country is said to be pretty fertile.

Thursday, Nov. 14th. The morning was cloudy, cold and disagreeable. About half a mile to the east of the village, I passed a rapid stream called West Canada creek. After crossing it the road rises to the top of a bank elevated more than one hundred feet above the river, affording a fine view of the country,

which continues seven miles to Little Falls. The valley is narrow, but well settled; the road good with a hard gravelly bottom, and the adjoining lands stony; but the wheatfields, being green, exhibited a pleasing appearance.

As I approached the falls, I observed the valley to contract till the hills appeared almost to close, and the banks were singularly rough and stony. Above the falls, I crossed the canal, handsomely faced with hewn stone; and I again crossed it, close by the locks as I entered the village, and passed on to Morgan's tavern, a handsome freestone building. While breakfast was preparing, I took a view of the village and canal.

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The canal was cut about eighteen years ago. It was originally constructed of wood; but that falling to decay, it was rebuilt of stone eight years ago. There are eight locks at this place. The toll has been lessened within these few years, on account of the waggons taking away the trade from the canal. It is at present one dollar twenty-five cents per ton.

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When breakfast was announced, I went into the parlors, where a very handsome young lady was seated at the breakfast table, to pour out the tea; and the articles before her were so numerous that I could not help taking an inventory of them. The insertion of this will show that the people who live in the back woods are not quite so much in the savage state as some late tourists would have us to believe.

Table and table-cloth,  
Tea-tray,  
Two metal tea-pots,  
One metal milk-pot!  
Sugar-bowl,  
China cups,  
Egg-cup,  
Silver sugar-tongs,  
Silver tea-spoons,  
Silver castor with six cut crystal glasses,  
Plates,  
Carving-knife and fork, and common knife and  
fork,  
Tea,  
Sugar,  
Cream,  
Bread,  
Butter,  
Toast and butter,  
Beefsteak,  
Eggs,  
Cheese,  
Crackers,  
Potatoes,  
Beets,  
Salt,  
Vinegar,  
Black pepper,  
Cayenne pepper.

I recollected Dr. Adam Smith's theory of the division of labour. How many persons must have been employed, thought I, in providing materials for this breakfast. The charge was twenty-five cents.



As I passed through the village, I observed some masons building a stone arch, the first I have seen building in America. Half a mile below the village, the road comes close to the river side, and is carried over a large hollow, by a wooden bridge, from which there is a fine view of the lower part of the falls. Below this there are huge masses of perpendicular rocks on each side, and the whole bears evident marks of having been cut through by the river. Beyond this the bottoms spread out to the usual breadth of about a mile and are well cultivated. The river is navigable, and the sloping declivities of the hills present many handsome views.

Beyond the falls, the road passes through a low level tract of land, about seven miles when it rises to an eminence of at least two hundred feet, from whence there is a charming bird's-eye view of the valleys below and of the hills, woods and cultivated fields at a distance, many of which had been sown with wheat and presented a cheering, verdant prospect.

After descending from this eminence, I crossed East Canada creek, a very rapid stream, having numerous mills upon it. On the east side of the creek, I perceived a machine for beating clay to make bricks.

Rising again to a high bank, I stopped at a tavern to feed my horse. Here I met the Utica stage and saw a young gentleman, two days from New York, distant upwards of two hundred and twenty miles. I was informed that this was the frontier in the time of the American war, where it raged with great fury. Our landlord, a German, said he carried arms during the war, and should his adopted country's cause require it, he was ready to turn out again, though sixty-four years of age.

Leaving the tavern, I passed a rapid stream, where I observed a saw-mill, and a hemp or flax-mill, and, five miles below, I saw the Palatine bridge across the Mohawk river. The road proceeds about four miles through a low bottom of stiff clay, and at dark I passed a curious projecting point called the Nose two miles from which I stopped at the house of Mr. Connolly, an intelligent Irishman.

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In the morning, my obliging landlord gave me directions as to the road and I set out at sunrise the weather being clear with hard frost.

To the north of the tavern, there is a low bottom about a quarter of a mile broad terminated by a steep ridge about three hundred feet high, from whence water is conveyed in pipes to the house. This ridge approaches the river, as it proceeds westward close to which it forms the point, already mentioned, called the Nose, from its resemblance to the nose on the human face.

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Johnstown contains about sixty houses and five hundred inhabitants. It is the seat of justice of Montgomery county, and has a court-house, jail, an episcopal and presbyterian church, an academy, and two printing-offices. There are nine taverns and nine stores. Two doctors and eight lawyers reside in the town; the other inhabitants are generally mechanics. Johnstown was settled about the time of the war, and the inhabitants are mostly of Scottish and Irish extraction.

At 3 o'clock, I set out for Broadalbin distant seven or eight miles. The road passes over high lands, the soil rather sandy. From every point by the way there

is an extensive view of high-elevated lands to the north and west, of the Catskill hills to the south; and to the east the vast range of mountains in Vermont appear in lofty majesty. I reached Broadalbin near sun-set and stopping to inquire for Mr. McIntyre, I found an old gentleman at the gate engaged in a contest with a cow, who seemed determined to have two pumpkins whether he would or not. Having assisted him to drive off the intruder, I was proceeding with my inquiries, when he told me he was Daniel McIntyre. He ordered a boy to take charge of my horse, invited me into the house, and introduced me to his family and informed me that James would be home presently, when we would get all the news.

Mr. James McIntyre soon arrived and I spent a very pleasant evening with the family.

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After supper the family assembled to prayers and the whole was conducted in the *primitive* mode practised by the peasantry of Scotland, so beautifully described in Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*, of which I shall transcribe the last stanza, and close the transactions of the day.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's *Eternal* King,  
The *saint*, the *father*, and the *husband* prays;  
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing  
That thus they all shall meet in future days,  
There ever bask in uncreated rays  
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,  
Together hymning their Creator's praise  
In such society yet still more dear;  
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

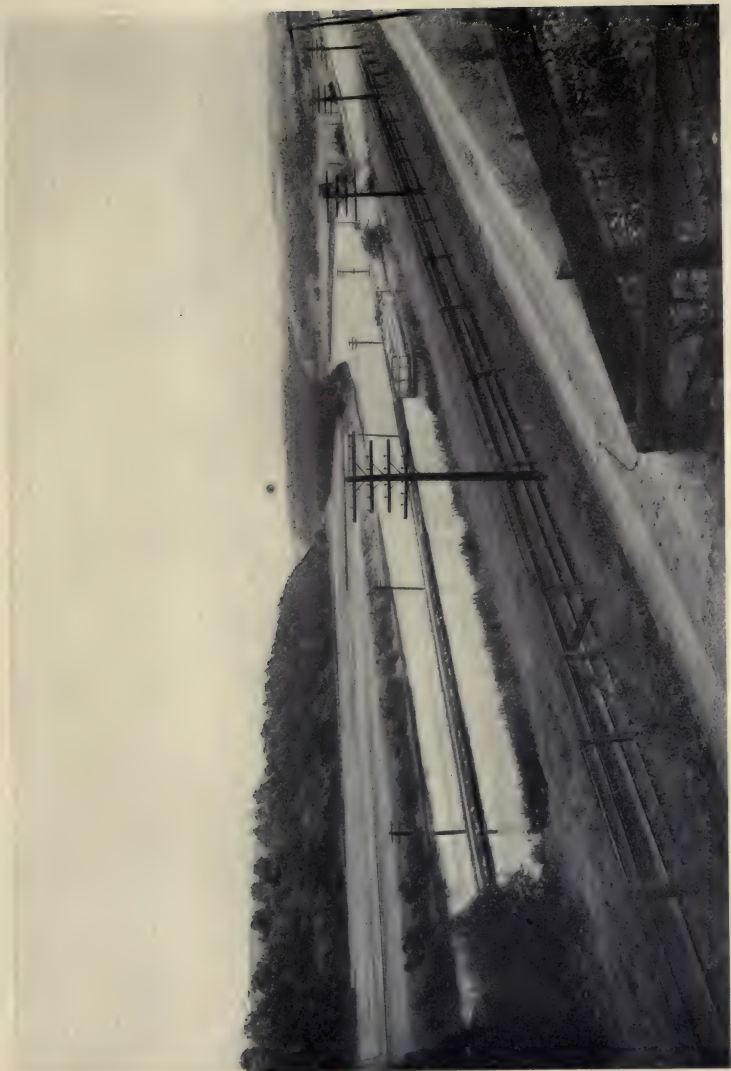
## CHAPTER XII

### RIVER AND CANAL

THE Indian canoe was still occasionally to be seen on the Mohawk River, and so, in greater frequency, was the bateau. As in the days of Sir William, it bore its load of merchandise, the latter carried around the rifts in wagons with small wide-rimmed wheels and the bateaux themselves forced over them by means of poles and ropes. The rifts were as follows:—the first about six miles beyond Schenectady, known as Six Flats rift—next, in order, Fort Hunter rift, Caughnawaga rift, Keator's rift, Brandywine rift, Ehle's rift, Kneiskern's rift, the Little Falls and Wolf's rift.

After the completion, in 1797, of the new system of navigation introduced by the "Inland Lock Navigation Company of New York"—Mohawk to Wood Creek, the Durham boat began to take the place of the bateau. Somewhat like the modern canal-boat in shape, weighing from eight tons to eighty, provided near the bow with a mast, it was propelled mainly by means of pole or tow-line. The making and repairing of Durham boats





The Mohawk River, near St. Johnsville



became a great industry at Schenectady and, as late as 1812, many of them could be seen at the dock yard on Strand Street. The Schenectady boats were most in demand. Ten to fifteen tons could be carried and the load often included apples and cider. Several of these craft were wont to journey in company for mutual helpfulness at the rifts. One of them has been described as

a round-bottom skiff forty to fifty ft. in length. They have likewise a moveable mast in the middle. When the wind serves they set a square and top sail which at a distance gives them the appearance of a square-rigged vessel coming before the wind.

From eighteen to twenty-five miles a day was about the amount of water covered.

Within the boat on each side is a fixed plank running fore and aft with a number of cross cleats nailed upon it for the purpose of giving the poleman a sure footing in hand-polling.

It is not often that a fair wind will serve for more than three or four hours together, as the irregular course of the river renders its aid very precarious; their chief dependence, therefore, is upon their pike poles. These are eighteen to twenty-two feet in length, having a sharp pointed iron, with a socket weighing ten to twelve pounds affixed to the lower end; the upper had a large knob called a button, mounted upon it, so that the poleman may press upon it his whole weight without endangering his person.

The men, after setting their poles against a rock, bank or bottom of the river, inclining their heads very

low, place the upper end of the button against the front part of their right or left shoulder (according to the side on which they are poling), then falling down on their hands and toes, creep the whole length of the gang boards, and send the boat forward with considerable speed.

This from the diary of Christian Schultz, who graphically and accurately describes a river voyage of 1807. One of these boats was named *The Mohawk Regulator*; one, *The Butterfly*, according to Schultz, who further says, "Nothing can be more charming than sailing on the Mohawk."

The Durham was a broad boat with a flat bottom and straight sides, and so shaped as to be easily guided and propelled.

Notwithstanding these helps, progress over rapids was difficult and, after long delay, crews were sometimes forced to drop down to their old position and do their work over again.

By 1796, some of these boats had been provided with cabins for occasional passengers and an enormous quantity of furs was now conveyed by the same craft to Albany. About 1812, three hundred boats or thereabouts passed yearly to Rome.

One of the best known of the several ferries across the Mohawk was Walrath's Ferry at Fort Plain, licensed as follows:

We the Supervisors of Tryon County do hereby certify that the Place of John Walrad is very convenient to be an established Ferry and at this time



highly necessary to preserve a Communication between Forts Plank and Paris, and do hereby recommend the said John Walrad to his Excellency Governor Clinton for a License for a Ferry across the Mohawk River. Given under our Hands the 6th day of April 1780.

JELLES FONDA, CHRIST P. YATES, JOHN PICKERD,  
AUGUSTINUS HESS, HENRICK STARING.

In 1797 three ferries crossed the Mohawk at Schenectady,—the upper, from the foot of Washington street; the middle one, one mile below, and a lower ferry,—these kept respectively by Jan Baptist Van Epps, Volkert Veeder, and John Baptist Van Vorst. To the money received from the upper ferry claim was laid by Van Epps from his ownership of land adjacent to Washington Street; John Sanders, who owned that at the opposite landing, and by Joseph C. Yates, whose land lay below Van Epps on the same side of the river. Mr. Sanders finally arranged to take toll from boats leaving his landing for Schenectady and Messrs. Van Epps and Yates divided the returns accruing from boats leaving Schenectady.

Twelve miles west of Schenectady was established the present Hoffman's ferry so called since 1835, after John Hoffman, who then became its owner. Previous to that time it had been known as "Vedder's."

Line boats began to run about 1815, and we have the pleasure of perusing the advertisement of a prospective runner of the line.

## MOHAWK AND CAYUGA

PACKET BOATS AUG. 1814

The Subscribers in order more fully to accommodate the public have determined upon starting a boat from Schenectady for Cayuga and the Seneca Falls, regularly every Saturday evening during the season. This is intended merely as an addition to their establishment and will in no wise interfere with their usual business, as boats and waggons will as heretofore be kept in constant readiness to transport from the city of Albany to any part of the Western Country, either by land or water, whatever property may be directed to their care. Gentlemen who reside at a distance from the water communications are informed that their goods will be delivered from the boats at any point they may think proper to designate.

ERI LUSHER &amp; Co.,

Schenectady,

Aug. 1, 1814.

Another advertisement dated Schenectady, May 1, 1815, reads:

## NEW LINE

## THE OLD LINE CONTINUED.

From Schenectady for Oswego, Cayuga and Seneca Falls. One boat will start regularly every Saturday during the season. Goods received between Saturday and Tuesday evening to be forwarded beyond Utica,

will be put on board the Stage Boat of Wednesday morning, and will overtake the Saturday's boat at Utica, where they will be put on board and forwarded as directed.

Wagons will as heretofore be kept in constant readiness to transport from the city of Albany to Schenectady or any part of the United States and Canada.

Gentlemen who reside at a distance from the water communication are informed that their goods will be delivered from the boats at any place they may think proper to designate; and at the Seneca Falls, to avoid delays, wagons are provided to convey the property, if required, to its place of destination.

The subscribers consider themselves the actual carriers, and responsible for all property passing through their hands, unavoidable accidents excepted.

ERI LUSHER & Co.,

Schenectady, May 1, 1815.

These boats were in shape somewhat like the old-fashioned Durham, but provided with a cabin in the middle, with curtains and cushioned berths. The very earliest boats ran in the day-time only. This plan, however, existed but for a short time. Two miles per hour was the average rate of speed and there were accommodations for about thirty happy passengers whose berths by night served for seats by day. Two horses drew the precious freight and were relieved every twelve hours.

At night a sheet, a hens'-feather stuffed pillow, a spread, and a more or less agreeable room-mate

above or below were concomitants of travel. In addition to these accommodations, somewhat "tough" fare was provided, all at the rate of two and one-half cents per mile. Possibly the passengers preferred to "eat themselves," in which case they sailed comfortably at the rate of one cent per mile and eked out their supplies of crackers and cheese by purchasing sundries at the wayside groceries, at which the captain now and then obligingly stopped.

The line boats, soon accommodating fifty passengers, drawn by three horses, and carrying seventy-five tons freight were well adapted to the wants of emigrating families who took their furniture with them.

The Mohawk River, as a water thoroughfare, was destined soon to give place to a rival.

Said Elkanah Watson as early as 1791:

I am induced to believe, should the western canals ever be made, and the Mohawk valley in one sense become a continuation of the Hudson river by means of canals and locks, that it will most clearly obviate the necessity of sending produce to market in winter by sleighs. On the contrary, it would be stored upon the margin of the Mohawk in winter and be sent in the summer months in bateaux to be unloaded aboard vessels in the Hudson.

Elkanah Watson was early interested in the thought of establishing a canal route through the



valley, as were also several other prominent men of the time. It is probable that "Clinton's Ditch," the "raging Canawl," assumed definite existence for the first time in the brain of Gouverneur Morris in 1803. It was finally pronounced practicable by James Geddes, who had been asked to look into the matter, and later, in 1810, by a Board of Commerce, which had been appointed to survey and investigate. Five millions was the estimated expense. The war with Great Britain caused temporary delay, but the subject was again taken up in 1815.

It was on the Fourth of July, 1817, that ground was broken at Rome. On October 22, 1819, the first boat passed thence to Utica. In 1821 the line was complete as far as Little Falls. The canal of those days was forty feet wide at top, twenty-eight feet at bottom, and four feet deep.

October 26, 1825, there started from Buffalo, in the morning, a gay procession, headed by the canal-boat, *Seneca Chief*, bearing men closely connected with the interests of the canal. The *Young Lion of the West* carrying distinguished men and diversified products, followed. Along the shore, illuminations and cannon marked the progress of the fleet.

When the procession reached Albany, ten yawls were deputed to tow in the boats. A procession of twenty-four cartmen was on hand to greet them, each cart properly labelled as to its distinctive features.

The eminent citizens whom the *Young Lion of the West* had borne from Buffalo were entertained upon the bridge at tables arranged amid shrubbery. Among the toasts were:

Canals!—The surest guarantee against the calamities of war; they constitute the strong ligaments that bind us together in energy and strength.

The cartmen of Albany,—may they never back out when they can drive in!

Said Mr. Bayard of Albany:

Hereafter our wheat will compete in European markets with that of Poland and Odessa and a commerce be there established, important to the merchant and beneficial to the agriculturist.

At the conclusion of the exercises Mr. Barret recited, at the theater, Mr. James Ferguson's poem—

Hark to that shout; so wild, so high,  
It pains the ear; it rends the sky!  
It bursts where giant Erie's breath  
The storm distills!  
And o'er Yagara's misty crest  
Its echo thrills.

Cayuga and his brother lake  
Their many thousand voices wake;

And wizard Mohawk answers where he bounds  
Forth from his hills;  
Or turns his mystic rounds,  
Gathering his rills.

In triumphal glory, colors flying, small boating fry following, cannon booming, bonfires blazing along the shore, the *Seneca Chief* glided on, adown the Hudson, through the Narrows, to Sandy Hook. There the keg loaded at Buffalo was produced, Governor Clinton knocked in its head, and the waters of the Erie mingled with the Atlantic waves.

October 29, 1825, *Benjamin Wright* reached Buffalo from Albany, the first packet to make the trip. By 1826 the Erie canal was a thoroughfare, and though many people of the day believed it would prove the "ruin of Albany," it was nevertheless destined to be a "crown of glory" to the State.

Large, comfortable boats were the packets, propelled by three horses and accomplishing five miles an hour. The earliest boats travelled by daylight only, and lodgings were obtained at taverns along the shore. Each day stages made connection with the day lines just above the locks. The departure of the packet was announced by bugle and townsfolk gathered around to see the boats make off.

A mighty person was the captain as he seated himself in the cabin, called for his writing-desk, ordered the bell rung to call up passengers to pay their fares, then, locking his desk with an

enormous key, stalked pompously up and down the deck.

Yes, a jolly old soul he was, proud of the number and appearance of his passengers, and offering them advice in every particular, even as to the nature of their route, and alas! often betraying their confidence for filthy lucre! When the canal had finally pushed its way to Buffalo and made clean-cut connection from end to end of the State, designing runners from the leading steamboats that plied the Great Lakes were wont to meet the captain at Black Rock or some point shortly below the end of his route and offer him commissions on the passengers whom he might secure for them. Then, forsooth, the boat was run ashore at some convenient point and, willy-nilly, the confiding passengers were delivered to the care of the steamboat selected for them by the commander in whom they had confided!

As the Captains of the Western Boats refuse to permit any person except Jason Parker or persons employed by him to go on board the Boats to offer conveyance to passengers to the East—the Proprietors of the Accommodation Line of the Canal Packets take this method to inform the public that the Packet *Fairplay* leaves Utica on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday on the arrival of the Western Boats and arrives at Palatine Bridge (42 miles) the same day. Passengers will sleep at Reed's (formerly Bush's) and proceed by Stage next day to Albany to dine.

The Packet *Pilot* leaves Utica every day at 3 P.M.



for Little Falls, and returning leaves Little Falls at six in the morning.

UTICA, June 5, 1823.

From a waybill of the *William C. Bouck*, leaving Utica May 1, 1823, we learn that Mr. Lyman paid \$5.00 from Utica to Rochester and "found himself." Mr. Cummins' bill for a party of five was \$11.50—fifty cents was deducted because one was a servant girl.

It will be interesting to append a document relating to the supply of horses along the canal, although of later date.

I agree with Victor A. Putman of Glen to furnish at his barn, in the town of Glen about the close of the Canal next fall—horses, to be kept by him until led off by me next spring. Said horses are to be furnished with good and commodious stables and yard room, plenty of hay (of the growth of the present year) for food, and straw for bedding, together with a good supply of wholesome water conveniently situated. Upon faithful fulfilment of above stipulations and delivery of the horses, agree to pay as full compensation for keeping Sixty-two and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents per week, each horse. Said Putman is also to board a man if required to take care of said horses, for one dollar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  per week. Should any horse or horses die or be otherwise disposed of a deduction of the price of keeping to be made for such absence.

Signed & Sealed at Glen,

Sept. 10th, 1855.

E. S. PROSSER,  
By J. T. HANNIBAL.

(Reverse side.)

No hay to Be fed  
in the yard—& the  
hay that Putman Raised  
is to Be accepted on this  
Contract

J. P. HANNIBAL.

At night there were head-lights, two in number, with goose-quills reflecting further lustre upon the turbid stream. Pleasant must have been the travel on a summer night amid the scenery of the romantic Mohawk, dimly shadowed, dimly revealed. By day and night the boatmen loved to entertain their charges with points on the tides and the currents and distances between the locks, and with exhibitions of their skill. By day and night the scene was constantly changing and passengers now and again were cleared from the deck that the boat might pass under a bridge.

At daytime, tourists would often vary the monotony by walking ahead. Comments on the beauty of the landscape were frequent. The scenery of the Little Falls of the period was particularly admired for its grandeur and compared by some to the Trossachs. Mrs. Trollope says of it,—“I never saw so sweetly wild a spot.”

Some of the canal patrons, however, were not entirely impressed with the beauties of packet travel. Mrs. Trollope complains of

the library of a dozen books, the backgammon board, the mean little berths and the shady side of the cabin,

all pre-empted, without regard to a woman's and especially an English woman's previous claim.

Miss Martineau says:

I would never advise ladies to travel by canal unless the boats are quite new and clean, or at least far better than anything that I saw or heard of. On fine days, it is pleasant enough sitting outside (except for having to duck under bridges every quarter of an hour) and in dark evenings, the approach of the boat lights on the water is a pretty sight; but the horrors of nights and wet days more than compensate for all the advantages these vehicles can boast.

It is pleasant to learn that at Utica these travellers found rest. Miss Martineau arrived "pretty well fagged by the sun by day and a crowded cabin by night" and here lemonade, feather-fans, and eau-de-cologne kept her from surrendering at discretion to a thermometer in which the mercury stood at ninety.

Miss Martineau says, in speaking of Bagg's hotel, that they "knew how to value cold water, spacious rooms and retirement after the annoyances of the boats."

Says Fanny Kemble, referring to a trip of July, 1833:

We proceeded by canal to Utica, which distance we performed in a day and a night, starting at two from Schenectady and reaching Utica the next day about

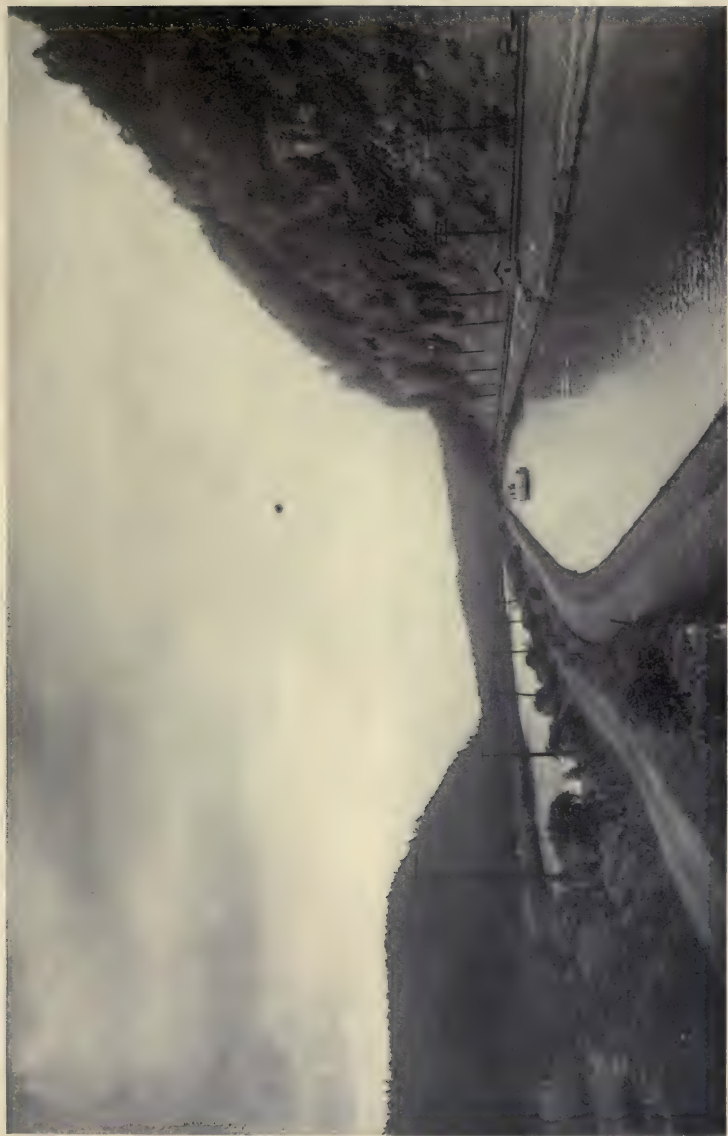


noon. I like travelling by the canal boats very much. Ours was not crowded; and the country through which we passed being delightful, the placid, moderate gliding through it at about four miles and a half an hour seemed to me infinitely preferable to the noise of wheels, the rumble of a coach and the jerking of the roads, for the gain of a mile an hour. The only nuisances are the bridges over the canal, which are so very low, that one is obliged to prostrate one's self on the deck of the boat to avoid being scraped off it, and this humiliation occurs, upon an average, once every quarter of an hour.

The valley of the Mohawk, through which we crept the whole sunshiny day, is beautiful from beginning to end; fertile, soft, rich and occasionally approaching sublimity and grandeur in its rocks and hanging woods. We had a lovely day, and a soft blessed sunset, which, just as we came to a point where the canal crosses the river and where the curved and wooded shores on either side recede leaving a broad, smooth basin, threw one of the most exquisite effects of light and colour I ever remember to have seen over the water and through the sky.

From rise of morn till set of sun  
I've seen the mighty Mohawk run  
And as I marked the woods of pine  
Along his mirror darkly shine  
Like tall and gloomy forms that pass  
Before the wizard's midnight glass,  
And as I viewed the hurrying pace  
With which he ran the turbid race  
Rushing, alike untired and wild,  
Through shades that frowned and flowers that smiled,





The Mohawk River, at "The Nose"



Flying by every green recess,  
That wo'd him to its calm caress  
Yet sometimes turning with the wind,  
As if to leave one look behind!  
Oh, I have thought, and thinking, sighed—  
How like to thee, thou restless tide,  
May be the lot, the life of him  
Who roams along thy waters' brim;  
Through what alternate shades of woe  
And flowers of joy my path may go;  
How many an humble, still retreat  
May rise to court my weary feet,  
While still pursuing, still unblest,  
I wander on, nor dare to rest!  
But, urgent as the doom that calls  
Thy water to its destined falls,—  
I see the world's bewildering force  
Hurry my heart's devoted course,  
From lapse to lapse, till life be done  
And the last current cease to run;  
Oh, may my falls be bright as thine!  
May Heaven's forgiving rainbow shine  
Upon the mist that circles me  
As soft as now it hangs o'er thee!

MOORE.





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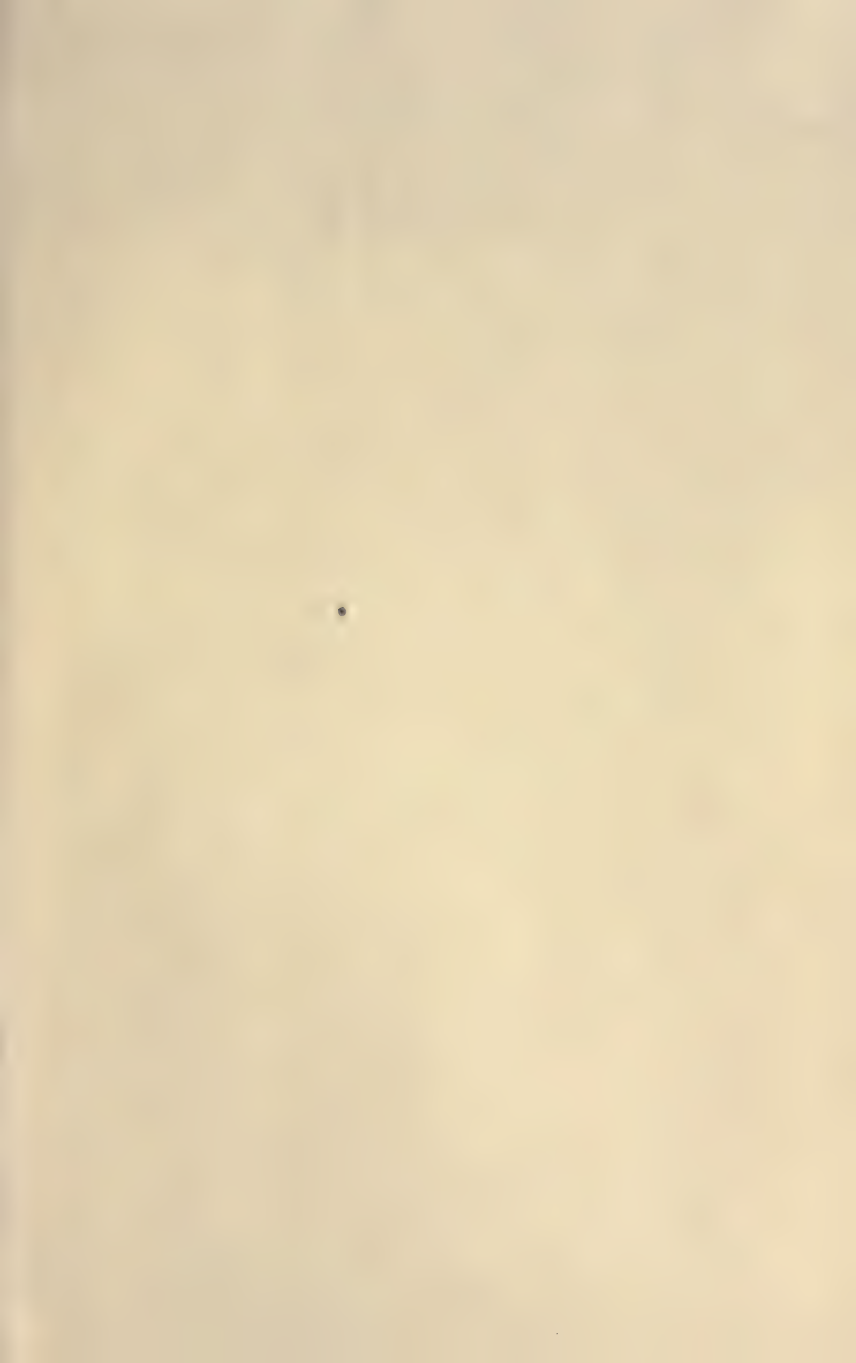
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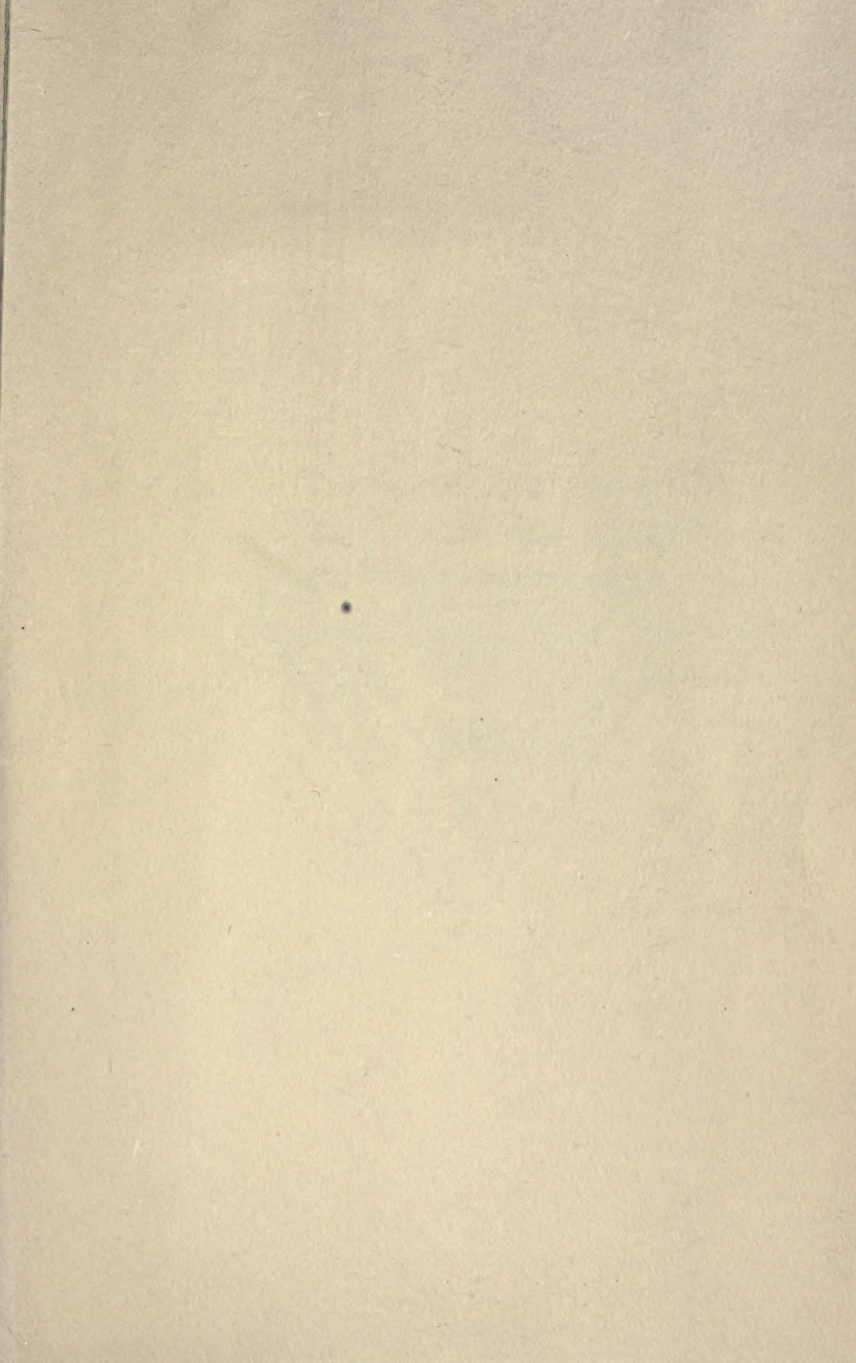
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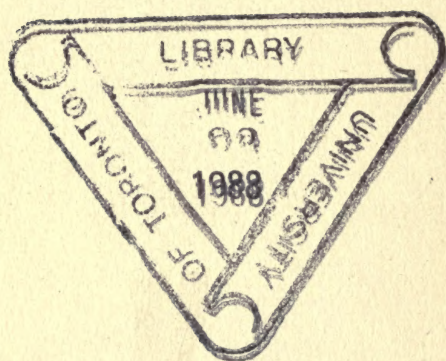












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